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An Anti-Semitic Slaughter Law?

The Origins of the Norwegian Prohibition of
Jewish Religious Slaughter c. 1890–1930

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Part 1: Introduction

Background

The Norwegian kosher slaughter affair covers a period of over 30 years, and was extensively covered in national and local newspapers, making it the largest issue in the Norwegian public concerning Jews prior to the Shoah. Controversy over kosher slaughtering, however, is far from being a phenomenon unique to Norway. Since the 1970s, there has been a growing scholarly literature on European kosher slaughter controversies; however, so far, no special study has addressed the Norwegian controversy. Moreover, the Norwegian controversy was one of the few that actually resulted in prohibition of kosher slaughtering. On June 12, 1929, the Norwegian parliament, the Storting, adopted a bill on slaughtering of livestock, which made Jewish religious slaughter impossible to practice in Norway from January 1, 1930. Despite protests from Norwegian Jews, Jewish organisations abroad, the country's leading veterinary experts, and prominent politicians such as Prime Minister Johan Ludwig Mowinckel, a majority of the Storting refused to exempt the Jewish slaughter method from the bill's requirement of previous stunning. Still today, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland are the only European countries where religious slaughter does not qualify as a reason for allowing exemptions from requirements of previous stunning. Most other Western countries acknowledge the importance of religious slaughter for Jewish and Muslim citizens by exempting religious slaughter from stunning requirements. However, religious slaughter is still a highly controversial issue in many countries. Like other visual expressions of religious practice, religious slaughter is also under increasing pressure in Western societies.

Although not described in the Pentateuch, the Jewish practice of religious slaughter, *shechita*, is commonly explained by citing the prohibition in Leviticus 17:12–13 of consuming blood. In Judaism, the regulations of *shechita* are regarded part of the oral law given to Moses on Mount Sinai and later codified in the Babylonian Talmud and *Shulchan Aruch* (16th century). According to these rules, *shechita* may be conducted only by a specially trained butcher, a *shochet*, approved by rabbinical authorities. The slaughtering consists of a single rapid cut of the animal's neck with a long special knife, the *hallaf*. The knife must be extremely sharp, with a perfect edge, free from the slightest flaw, and is controlled for its sharpness before the slaughtering of each animal. Once the knife is sharpened and controlled, the *shochet* cuts the

animal's neck with *one* swift movement, cutting through the soft structures anterior to the cervical spine, severing the trachea, the oesophagus, the two vagus nerves, as well as both carotid arteries and jugular veins, the main blood vessels supplying and draining the brain. If the shochet fails to cut in one move, the meat is *trefa* (or *treif* in Yiddish), and regarded as unsuitable for human consumption.¹ There are also a number of rules for processing the meat, ensuring that no blood is left. Most important in this context is that the back part of carcass usually is not used due to the difficulties of removing veins and arteries containing blood remnants.

From the mid 19th century, it became increasingly more common to stun animals before slaughter in many Western countries. Most branches of Judaism do not accept previous stunning due to religious commandments specifying that animals must be healthy and unwounded when slaughtered. Since modern pre-stunning methods cause animals lethal, irreversible brain injuries, pre-stunned animals are in Judaism not regarded healthy and fit for slaughtering.² The criticism of shechita has taken many forms throughout the past 150 years; however, the key issue has usually been Judaism's rejection of previous stunning. Defenders of the Jewish method, on the other hand, have claimed that neither the cut itself, nor the blooddraining inflict any unnecessary pain on animals. Some even claim the Jewish method to be more humane than conventional previous stunning methods.³ Although the latter claim usually has met little understanding, the Jewish slaughter method has nevertheless been tolerated in most European countries. In countries where animal laws or slaughter laws have demanded obligatory use of previous stunning, Jewish communities have as a rule been exempted for the sake of religious freedom.

Although some contemporary observers insisted that the Norwegian slaughter law of 1929 was motivated by animal-protection concerns, and not aimed at the Jewish practice as such, they could hardly ignore that preceding debates had centred almost exclusively on the Jewish slaughter method. The issue, known in Norwegian as the *schächtning* affair,⁴ was discussed in three lengthy parliamentary debates in the years 1927–1929, and received much attention in

¹ Munk & Munk 1976, p. 11f. See also Berman 1941 for a thorough theological, historical, and sociological introduction to the practice. For a discussion on the nature of shechita in a Jewish context, see also Lavi 2011.

² Berman 1941, p. 236. For a medical assessment of injuries stunning inflicts, see Gregory 2007, p. 193.

³ Dembo 1894 and more recently Levinger 1995.

⁴ The term *schächtning* is a Norwegian adaptation of the German/Yiddish noun *das Schächten*, which in turn is derived from the Hebrew term *shechita* (שחיטה).

the press. Many of the findings in this dissertation are based on some 400 newspaper sources, and the total amount of press coverage is most certainly higher. The debate engaged individuals from widely different spheres, everything from animal protectionists, butchers, members of Jewish religious congregations, authors, police officers, farmers, clergymen, teachers, editors, university professors, civil servants, politicians, and many others. The controversy was the first major conflict after Jews were admitted to the country in 1851 where the Jewish community came under pressure from the majority population. However, the controversy has never been the subject of any special study, and is surrounded by a number of misconceptions and inaccuracies in current discourse. The controversy has only been addressed as a secondary theme in accounts of Jewish history or in the history of anti-Semitism in Norway. In most other countries where kosher slaughtering debates reached a level comparable to that in Norway, there exists a considerable amount of research, even in countries where the controversies never resulted in a prohibition.⁵

The scholarly interest in the subject has been triggered by the fact that kosher slaughter controversies constitute a relatively widespread phenomenon in modern Western history, having emerged in most countries in north-western Europe from the 1880s onwards. In the European context, the German prohibition of kosher slaughter, introduced shortly after Hitler's succession to power in 1933, marks the climax of this phenomenon. However, scholars have not been interested in the subject only because of the infamous German prohibition, but rather because of the complex and multi-layered nature of these controversies. In European kosher slaughter controversies, widely different ideologies and discourses in modernity, such as animal protection, veterinary medicine, and anti-Semitism coincide. Recent scholarly contributions on the subject draw on insights from disciplines such as the history of anti-Semitism, legal history, literary studies, religious studies, animal studies, and science studies. Despite this broad disciplinary interest, there has been relatively little interest in the subject in Norway, even within the fields of migration studies and minority history.

As a result, the kosher slaughter controversy of the 1920s has nearly been forgotten by the general public, but the issue was recently brought to the fore in connection with the new Norwegian animal welfare bill in 2008. The 1929 slaughter law was incorporated in the revised animal protection law of 1974, which in turn was replaced by the current Animal

⁵ Most prominently the UK.

Welfare Act from January 1, 2010. Although there was little suggesting that the 2008 bill would exempt religious slaughter from the requirement of previous stunning – now also affecting the country’s growing Muslim population – the mere possibility of an exemption was met with reactions not unlike those of the 1920s. For instance, in a piece in the newspaper *Aftenposten*, the author and farmer Tore Stubberud referred to animals slaughtered according to the Jewish or Muslim slaughter methods as ‘pure objects for the archaic religious needs of Muslims and Jews’.⁶ In an interview with TV 2, Stubberud claimed that an eventual exemption for religious slaughter would constitute ‘the introduction of European Islam’ in Norway.⁷ Although some of the reactions in recent debates resemble the demonising and hateful rhetoric of the 1920s – not least the association made between religious slaughter and subversive forces – the legislative process in the late 2000s differed significantly from that of the 1920s. Whereas veterinary authorities and three consecutive cabinets had opposed the idea of an absolute prohibition of religious slaughter in the 1920s, the 1929 slaughter law went largely unchanged through the revisions in the 1970s and the late 2000s. An exemption for religious slaughter was hardly considered.⁸

Current EU legislation on slaughtering enables national exemptions for religious slaughter from EU requirements of previous stunning.⁹ Despite this, neither bureaucrats preparing the bill nor politicians eventually adopting the bill in 2009 considered using these provisions to accommodate requests from Jewish and Muslim communities.¹⁰ As long as religiously slaughtered meat is accessible through imports, legislators agree that Norway’s international commitments on religious freedom are not violated.¹¹ As animal welfare legislation tends to become stricter rather than looser, an exemption would most likely have been perceived as a loosening, and therefore met with vehement protests. This was also the case when representatives of the Jewish and Muslim communities in 2009 expressed hope that EU legislation would open up for an exemption for religious slaughter.

⁶ Tore Stubberud: ‘Rituell slakting i fri flyt’ in *Aftenposten*, 25.07.2009.

⁷ ‘Slakting uten bedøvelse kan bli lov i Norge’ on <http://www.tv2.no>, 10.05.2009. On the recent debates, see Døving & Kraft 2013.

⁸ Gjesdahl 1977, pp. 37–40; ‘Ot.prp. nr 27 (1973-74)’ in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1973-74. 4. del a.*, pp. 41–42; ‘Innst. O. nr. 3 (1974-75) in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1974-75. Sjette del. B.*, p. 4; *Ot.prp. nr. 15 (2008-2009). Om lov om dyrevelferd*, p. 44.

⁹ ‘Council Directive 93/119/EC’ in *Official Journal of the European Communities*, 31.12.1993, Article 2, No. 8.

¹⁰ Most Norwegian Muslims accept meat from livestock that has been stunned as long as the proper prayers are said. Still, the Islamic Council of Norway is highly critical of restrictions on religious slaughter.

¹¹ *Ot.prp. nr. 15 (2008-2009). Om lov om dyrevelferd*, pp. 44–45. See also Stenevik & Mejdell 2011, p. 146.

Paradoxically, in Norway, the same EU directive, which in most EU countries enables the practice of shechita, is used to justify the exemption of Sami reindeer slaughter from the Animal Welfare Act's ban on knives as stunning devices. In Sweden, this slaughter method is prohibited, and the Norwegian Food Safety Authority has expressed concerns about this method due to the risk of incorrect stabbing.¹² Still, the use of knives for killing reindeer is tolerated, and justified by citing the EU directive's provisions on animals killed in cultural or sports events. Even though these provisions are more relevant for animal sports such as bullfighting, they are in Norway interpreted to apply to Sami reindeer slaughter. The Sami's status as indigenous people presumably allows this practice to be interpreted as a 'cultural event'.¹³ The exemption for Sami reindeer slaughtering in current animal welfare legislation will not be addressed to any great extent in this dissertation, but the questionable justification for allowing this method places the absolute prohibition of religious slaughter in a different light.

This inconsistency was recently highlighted in a report from the presidency of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), addressing terms of tolerance and discrimination in Norway. The report, written by a three-member delegation that visited Oslo in June 2012, stated, 'Whatever its implications for Norway's Jews, the continued ban on kosher slaughter is surely a stain on the country's reputation for tolerance and inclusion'.¹⁴ The delegation further recommended that Norway, being a country where anti-Semitic attacks and hate speech have increased in recent years, should repeal the 1929 ban on kosher slaughter 'as an important symbolic gesture'.¹⁵ Although the report and its criticism of the prohibition of religious slaughter were mostly dismissed in Norwegian public debate,¹⁶ the Minister of Agriculture's reactions to the report further highlight the need for historical research on the issue. Minister Trygve Slagsvold Vedum of the Centre Party claimed to the national broadcaster NRK, 'We do not have a prohibition as is being claimed in the report.

¹² Stenevik & Mejdell 2011, p. 144.

¹³ *Ot.prp. nr. 15 (2008-2009). Om lov om dyrevelferd*, p. 44.

¹⁴ Akhmetov et al. 2012, p. 3.

¹⁵ Akhmetov et al. 2012, p. 8.

¹⁶ Partially because of the delegation's composition. One of its members, Rabbi Andrew Baker, is a member of the American Jewish Committee, while another delegation member was identified by *Aftenposten* as 'Ambassador Adil Akhmetov from Kazakhstan, a country which has excelled in high-level corruption and lack of democracy' ('Reagerer sterkt på holdninger til jøder' in *Aftenposten*, 21.10.2012).

[...] Kosher slaughtering does not take place in Norway because the Jewish Community refuses to accept the requirement of previous stunning'.¹⁷

This has certainly not been how the Oslo Jewish Community views the issue, and its official representatives have repeatedly characterised current slaughter regulations as a prohibition targeted at shechita. Most recently, Ervin Kohn, president of the Jewish Community in Oslo, has claimed that the 'prohibition of shechita is founded on an uninformed and partially prejudiced basis', and has called for a 'historical confrontation with the initial prohibition from 1930, when concerns for animal protection were mixed with attitudes hostile to Jews to an extent that the Storting hardly could know on what basis the prohibition was adopted'.¹⁸ In addition, a 2013 Norwegian Official Report (NOU) on religious politics acknowledges the challenges the animal welfare legislation poses for Norwegian Jews and Muslims, and explicitly refers to the slaughter regulations as a 'prohibition'. The report emphasises the existence of 'two legitimate and compelling conflicting views in this question: religious freedom and animal welfare'. Still, the report concludes that the current situation where 'ritually slaughtered meat' is available to Norwegian Jews through imports is a 'satisfying compromise'.¹⁹

Research Questions and Delimitation

Regardless of the problems current animal welfare legislation raises, recent debates reveal highly divided opinions on the origins of the unconditional requirement of previous stunning. Even the question of whether the Animal Welfare Act's slaughter regulations are to be regarded a prohibition of religious slaughter is disputed. This raises the question of whether the initial 1929 regulations were targeted at the Jewish slaughter method as such, or if they solely were aimed at ensuring humane treatment of slaughter animals through the means of obligatory pre-slaughter stunning. As the title of this dissertation suggests, the 1929 slaughter legislation was indeed targeted at prohibiting Jewish religious slaughter, even though the legal text did not explicitly refer to kosher slaughtering. However, as will become clear from the following chapters, the first initiatives for the law were in fact demands to prohibit the Jewish slaughter method. This motivation remained paramount throughout the process leading up to

¹⁷ '– OSSE misforstår slakteregler' in *NRK nyheter*, 22.10.2012 [http://www.nrk.no/norge/_-misforstar-norske-slakteregler-1.8367046 – read date 17.02.2014].

¹⁸ Ervin Kohn & Leif Knutsen: 'Et uryddig forbud' in *Aftenposten*, 24.10.2012.

¹⁹ *Det livssynsåpne samfunn. En helhetlig tros- og livssynspolitik*. NOU 2013:1, Oslo 2013, p. 289.

the Storting's adopting the bill in June 1929. Acknowledging the law's initial motivation as a means to prohibit shechita does not necessarily imply that a prohibition of kosher slaughter was the only motivation, or that all those supporting the prohibition were promoting anti-Semitism.

However, had there been no objections to kosher slaughter in the first place, slaughter regulations would most likely have been included in the animal protection law of 1935, already being under preparation in 1929. The 1929 slaughter law was eventually incorporated in the revised animal protection law of 1974.²⁰ Furthermore, Norwegian debates on slaughter reform had since the turn of the century centred almost exclusively on kosher slaughter. Even officials preparing the 1929 slaughter law in the Ministry of Agriculture regarded the law mainly as a restriction on the Jewish slaughter method. Thus, it will be demonstrated throughout this dissertation that demands to prohibit kosher slaughter constitute a continuous line in the genealogy of the 1929 slaughter law, all the way back to the first public demands for slaughter reform around the turn of the century and up until the final parliamentary session in 1929. This continuity was even evident for contemporaries, who consistently referred to the issue as the *schächtning* affair.

However, by acknowledging kosher slaughtering's centrality in the 1929 slaughter law, new questions emerge, which will be the main object to address throughout this dissertation. Ultimately, the aim of the dissertation is to explain why the prohibition was introduced in the first place, and why Norway was one of the very first European countries to introduce an absolute prohibition of kosher slaughtering. What needs did demands for prohibiting kosher slaughter fulfil? What concerns and motives did the agitation against the Jewish slaughter method derive from? Who were the main opponents of kosher slaughtering? How did the argumentation change in content and intensity during a period of over 30 years? Was opposition to kosher slaughtering an urban or rural phenomenon? Was the agitation against kosher slaughtering limited to certain regions? How do the agitation and subsequent prohibition relate to identity politics and concepts such as progress, civilisation, and modernity? What were the role and nature of anti-Semitism in the campaign against kosher slaughter, and inversely, how was the issue used in anti-Semitic agitation? What might the agitation against kosher slaughtering say about Norwegian anti-Semitism in the interwar

²⁰ Frøslie 1997, p. 14.

period? To what extent did the debate reflect deep-rooted prejudices against Jews? What other conflicts did the debate involve? What might the controversy tell us about the majority society in the period in question? What were the conditions of religious freedom and minority rights? What might the controversy tell us about the Jewish community in Norway? How did Jews react, and did Jewish communities respond differently?

Since the dissertation is revolving around the slaughter law's origins, the time delimitation chosen more or less corresponds to the entire period the issue was debated in Norway. The end of the study is set to 1929, but the immediate aftermath will be addressed briefly towards the end of the dissertation. Furthermore, the dissertation will not only look at the negative agitation against kosher slaughtering. To capture the dialectics between agitation against kosher slaughtering and defence of the Jewish method, positive assessments and voices defending kosher slaughtering are also included in the analysis. Other forms of religious slaughter such as *dabh* (Islam) or *jhatka* (Hinduism/Sikhism) are not addressed, since these practices arrived at a much later time in Norway, and rarely were touched upon in the debates.

This dissertation should not be read as a contribution to ongoing debates on whether shechita is to be regarded animal cruelty, or even if it should be allowed in Norway. These questions are both beyond the author's competence to evaluate, and of less interest for addressing the questions raised above. Still, the author acknowledges the legitimacy of objective arguments both for and against allowing kosher slaughter, and acknowledges that religious slaughtering, like other religious practices, should not be exempt from critical inquiry and public debate. However, it is the *lack* of objective arguments and the use of stereotypical images in the argumentation that makes the debates studied in this dissertation most interesting. Furthermore, there is reason to question the emphasis on slaughter methods (i.e. killing methods) in current legislation, in contemporary veterinary medicine, and in animal protection discourse, given the amount of other highly painful measures animals suffer during and *before* slaughtering. The preoccupation with killing methods becomes conspicuous when other aspects of industrial farming and mass slaughter are considered. As animal studies scholar Jonathan Burt concludes in a discussion of conflicts related to slaughter in modernity, where he criticises some of the objections raised against the Jewish slaughter method: 'the weakness

of all these positions lies in their focus, their unit of analysis if you like, on the act of killing rather than on the whole system of *mass* slaughter and what it entails'.²¹

Historiography

As previously mentioned, little attention has been paid to the kosher slaughter affair in Norwegian historiography. However, there are some notable exceptions to this, especially within the fields of Jewish history and history of anti-Semitism. The first who addressed the issue from a historical perspective was the secretary of the Mosaic Congregation in Kristiania, Harry M. Koritzinsky,²² although 7 years *before* the prohibition of kosher slaughtering was adopted by the Norwegian Storting.²³ In his brief 1922 account of the history of Norwegian Jews, he regarded attacks on kosher slaughtering in Kristiania and Aker in 1913 and 1914 as a 'germ of an anti-Semitic movement'. Koritzinsky claimed that the Jewish slaughter method had been criticised by 'some anti-Semites' for being 'brutal', and that anti-Semites had continued their 'unfounded accusations despite expert statements in favour of allowing kosher slaughtering'.²⁴ Although Koritzinsky's account is close to the events, there are several reasons for critically reviewing his characterisation of the 1913/1914 controversy as purely anti-Semitic attacks. As will be evident from later chapters, the attacks Koritzinsky had in mind mainly derived from the animal protection movement, even though some figures with outspoken anti-Semitic sympathies also joined the attacks on kosher slaughter in these years. It is true that even the animal protection movement to an increasing extent played on anti-Semitic stereotypes in its agitation. However, it seems both unfair and simplistic to reduce all critique of the Jewish slaughter method to a 'germ of an anti-Semitic movement'.

Historian Christhard Hoffmann has shown in a critical review of Norwegian-Jewish historiography that the early historiography of Norwegian Jewry is characterised by a wish to construct a specific Norwegian-Jewish identity on one side, while on the other side to promote

²¹ Burt 2006, p. 139.

²² Harry Meier Koritzinsky (1900–1989), son of a Jewish immigrant from Poland and his Swedish-born wife, received military training from 1921, and served as an army officer in the early 1920s. He graduated from the University of Oslo as an economist in 1924, and later took over his father's clock business in Oslo. In the Jewish community, he served as the Mosaic Congregation's secretary in the 1920s, as well as trustee for a number of years after the war.

²³ In the entry on Norway in the fourth volume of *Jüdisches Lexikon*, published in Berlin in 1930, Koritzinsky gave his opinion on the 1929 prohibition, and now claimed that attacks mainly originated in the peasant movement and partly in the labour movement. Still, Koritzinsky suggested that anti-Semitism in Norway was 'ziemlich unbedeutend'. Despite an overwhelming parliamentary majority for the prohibition, he emphasised that the cabinet majority had acted 'judenfreundlich' in this question (Koritzinsky 1930, p. 523).

²⁴ Koritzinsky 1922, p. 67.

the Jewish minority's integration into the national community. The idea to write themselves into the majority's understanding of the nation's history was for Norwegian Jews greatly driven by a pursuit of social integration and cultural assimilation (acculturation).²⁵ Hoffmann identifies the strong emphasis on the poet Henrik Wergeland's struggle against the 1814 Constitution's exclusion of Jews as Koritzinsky's main tool in this twofold scheme of integration and identity shaping. However, Koritzinsky's account of the early kosher slaughter controversies may also be read in light of this process. When Koritzinsky identified opponents of kosher slaughtering as 'anti-Semites', this was not necessarily synonymous with labelling *all* opponents as 'anti-Semites'. The fact that the animal protection movement and a number of the capital's leading newspapers rallied against kosher slaughtering in these years may have been perceived as a difficult story to tell. By emphasising the controversy's anti-Semitic elements, Koritzinsky vindicated other opponents for participation in the process that led to a local ban on kosher slaughter in Kristiania in 1913.

Hoffmann observes the same desire of integration and identity shaping in the standard work on Jewish history in Norway, the 1400-page 'History of the Jews in Norway throughout 300 Years' by the Jewish philologist and secondary-school teacher Oskar Mendelsohn,²⁶ published in two volumes from 1969 to 1986.²⁷ Although Mendelsohn's work in many ways was groundbreaking and had a much broader outline than Koritzinsky's book, it offers little analysis, and is mostly a great compilation of events, sources, and documentation. As Hoffmann points out, Mendelsohn's work 'lacks social and cultural historic concepts that in an analytic manner could have captured the relationship between majority and minority, for instance concepts such as assimilation, acculturation, and integration'.²⁸ With regard to the kosher slaughtering controversy, Mendelsohn's 23 pages on the subject in the first volume have remained the most thorough account on the subject, and later scholarly contributions are mostly based on Mendelsohn's account of the events.

Although Mendelsohn's chapter on the kosher slaughter controversy gives a thorough and detailed account of debates both in the press and in parliament, even these events are

²⁵ Hoffmann 2013, p. 242f.

²⁶ Oskar Mendelsohn (1912–1993) taught at high schools in his hometown Trondheim and in Oslo after the war. He also held positions in the Mosaic Congregations in Oslo and Trondheim, and served as secretary and later as trustee for the latter.

²⁷ Mendelsohn 1969 and Mendelsohn 1986.

²⁸ Hoffmann 2013, p. 248.

somewhat superficially addressed by Mendelsohn. He mostly refers to the press debates and parliamentary debates in chronological order, while some of the affair's most decisive statements and events are mentioned only in subordinate clauses. However, his descriptions are mostly accurate, and Mendelsohn must have worked through a vast amount of sources. Still, Mendelsohn has downplayed or even omitted some of the controversy's most important events. Most notably is the legal process initiated against the Mosaic Congregation's trustee Axel Grün in 1914 for violation of the penal code's paragraph on animal cruelty. Since the Director of Public Prosecutions [Riksadvokaten] eventually dismissed the case, Mendelsohn regards the process against Grün as a minor event. While it is true that all charges against Grün and the Mosaic Congregation were dropped, Mendelsohn either was not aware of, or deliberately omitted, the prosecuting authorities' subsequent decision to request the government to prepare a bill prohibiting kosher slaughtering. In this dissertation, these events are regarded as decisive for the outcome of the controversy some 15 years later. Moreover, they will also be related to police and judicial authorities' attitudes in other cases concerning Jews in the years immediately before, during, and after the First World War (see chapter 3.3).

Even though Mendelsohn is reluctant to analyse the debates and to identify the motives behind the prohibition, he does not attempt to conceal that some actors were motivated by hatred of Jews. For instance, he quotes contemporary press coverage identifying agitation against the Jewish slaughter method as primarily a campaign against Jews. But Mendelsohn himself examines this question only to a limited extent – he merely establishes that 'Unfortunately, another motive was added [to the agitation]: resentment toward Jews'.²⁹ Given the vast scope of his project, Mendelsohn's unwillingness to investigate the extent and role of anti-Semitism is of course understandable. Still, devoting to the issue only 23 of 663 text pages (only in the first volume), may not be explained solely by weak historical craftsmanship, or by the book's function as an all-encompassing work on Jewish-Norwegian history. One should assume that the single case attracting most attention to Norwegian Jewry prior to the Shoah also would have attracted Jewish chroniclers' attention to a greater extent than has been the case in Mendelsohn's *opus magnum*.

Mendelsohn's extensive, yet superficial account of the kosher slaughtering affair may also be explained by its incompatibility with the 'master story' Hoffmann identifies in Mendelsohn's

²⁹ Mendelsohn 1969, p. 582.

work, namely the ‘classical story of a minority’s integration in a national community’.³⁰ Hoffmann characterises this as a story with a ‘happy ending’ – ‘the identity-shaping myth of origin and the judicial and ideological foundation of their integration in the Norwegian nation’.³¹ In addition, when Mendelsohn wrote his book, the kosher slaughter affair was a chapter closed long ago. The cost of confrontation was probably perceived as too high, and the historian Marta Gjernes has also identified similar tendencies in other issues. According to her, the Mosaic Congregation in Kristiania/Oslo followed a strategy of ‘cautious integration’, and had from an early stage always acted cautiously in public debates.³²

Among the less cautious contributions from Jewish quarters, the psychiatrist David Abrahamsen’s almost contemporary account should be mentioned. In his 1935 book *Jeg er jøde* (‘I am a Jew’), Abrahamsen characterised the controversy as a rare ‘case of anti-Jewish mass psychosis’ in Norway.³³ Although Abrahamsen’s contribution should be read more as a defence for the practice rather than as a historical account, he identifies an important aspect of the controversy, namely its self-reinforcing dynamics. Abrahamsen observed that as the debate progressed, animosity towards Jews also increased. Abrahamsen also emphasised the discrepancy between the obsession with kosher slaughter and the comparatively modest interest in other animal protection causes, such as hunting and castration without anaesthetics.³⁴ Despite his bold assessment of the issue in 1935, Abrahamsen symptomatically omitted his characterisation of the controversy as an ‘anti-Jewish mass psychosis’ in the 1985 revision of the book.³⁵

Another contribution on the subject that cannot be accused for having a cautious approach is criminologist Per Ole Johansen’s 1984 book *Oss selv nærmest* (‘Closest to ourselves’) on attitudes of ‘official Norway’ towards Jews in the interwar years. Johansen’s book was intended as a corrective to hegemonic war narratives constructed after the Second World War, in which anti-Semitic attitudes and discriminatory policies had been ascribed only to the National Unity Party or to the German occupiers. Johansen’s point of departure is the participation of Norwegian police and bureaucracy in the registration, arrest, and deportation

³⁰ Hoffmann 2013, p. 248.

³¹ Hoffmann 2013, pp. 249–250.

³² Gjernes 2007, p. 233. See also Kjeldstadli 2003, p. 412.

³³ Abrahamsen 1935, p. 89.

³⁴ Abrahamsen 1935, pp. 96–98.

³⁵ Abrahamsen 1985, pp. 88–91.

of Jewish citizens during the Second World War. His main intention is to show how the same institutions had a history of anti-Semitism and discrimination prior to the war. Although Johansen's attention is mostly directed at government measures against Jewish immigrants in the interwar period, he also includes a chapter on the kosher slaughtering controversy. In that chapter, Johansen not only looks at the police and immigration authorities, but also takes into account other actors, such as the animal protection movement, the Church, and the peasant movement. One may ask to what extent some of these groups represented 'official Norway', but Johansen concludes his chapter by looking at the parliamentary debate of 1929, which surely must count as statements representative of 'official Norway'.

Still, the chapter seems somewhat misplaced in Johansen's framework, which in turn has consequences for how he views the controversy. First, the connection Johansen makes between the animal protection movement and anti-Semitic attitudes within police and immigration authorities is somewhat weak, and relies mostly on one leading police officer's engagement in the animal protection movement, Johan Sørh. The relation between Sørh's anti-Semitic statements and actions against Jews as a police officer, on one side, and his involvement in the animal protection movement, on the other, will be discussed in chapter 4. However, already at this point it should be noted that the connection made by Johansen not only creates the impression of Sørh's involvement in the animal protection movement as being merely a pretext for his 'real' intentions. It also creates a picture of an anti-Semitic animal protection movement, even though Johansen states certain reservations, claiming that 'most animal protectionists were probably inspired by idealistic motives'.³⁶

Like Mendelsohn, Johansen makes few attempts to uncover the origins of the agitation against kosher slaughtering. The reader is consequently left with the impression that anti-Semitic notions created the agitation in the first place. Consequently, the agitation against kosher slaughter becomes another step towards collaboration and participation in German extermination politics. While these are certainly interesting perspectives with respect to the police and immigration authorities, they are not necessarily well suited to explain the prohibition of religious slaughter. The most interesting instance for highlighting the police's role in the kosher slaughter controversy would have been the trial against the Mosaic Congregation's trustee Grün in 1914. However, like Mendelsohn, Johansen mentions this

³⁶ Johansen 1984, p. 63.

incident only briefly.³⁷ There are two possible reasons for this: first, Johansen relies mostly on Mendelsohn's work, and has only to a limited extent consulted primary sources. Second, the trial date (winter/spring 1914) does not fit into the book's time delimitation, running from the outbreak of the First World War to the Second World War. Perhaps more important, the case against Grün does not correspond with Johansen's underlying hypothesis that increased xenophobia after the outbreak of the Great War gave impetus to the authorities' measures towards Jews in the interwar years.³⁸ Johansen seemingly underestimates the presence of xenophobic attitudes among police and other judicial authorities *prior* to World War I. Regardless of when and how these attitudes emerged, Johansen's book gives valuable insights into attitudes common in the police and other judicial authorities, which in turn are useful in uncovering the prohibition's origins, albeit not necessarily as intended by Johansen.

In a recent article, thirty years after *Oss selv nærmest*, Johansen concentrates on the animal protection movement, and points out the kosher slaughtering issue's disproportionate role in the Norwegian movement's activities prior to 1930. Johansen claims that the animal protection associations 'with their resourceful leaders from society's higher strata had connections to elites in bureaucracy, business and politics' and thus were able to create a broad front against kosher slaughtering.³⁹ The 'symbiosis' between the movement, the police, and centre-right press was 'nourished by the same aversion towards Jews'. He further claims that the kosher slaughtering issue functioned as a 'marker for the Norwegian animal protection movement in a time where so many other questions competed for a place on the political agenda', thus suggesting that the issue was used as a pretext for gaining attention.⁴⁰ Although some of these observations make much sense, many pieces are still missing in Johansen's puzzle, and the article relies heavily on the chapter from his initial book. One significant difference, however, is that Johansen to a greater extent than in previous works has consulted archival sources. Unfortunately, his use of these sources is questionable, and leads to several errors. For instance, statements from a 1926 white paper on slaughter regulations are attributed the head of the government veterinary authority, Halvor Horne,⁴¹ when the author of these passages in reality was Minister of Agriculture Haakon Fiske. In fact, Horne

³⁷ Johansen 1984, p. 63.

³⁸ Johansen 1984, p. 9.

³⁹ Johansen 2014, p. 251.

⁴⁰ Johansen 2014, pp. 260–263.

⁴¹ Johansen 2014, pp. 255–256.

and Five disagreed on the issue, Horne favouring an exemption for Jews in new slaughter bill (see chapter 3.5).

The only English language contribution on the Norwegian kosher slaughter controversy is an article from 1989 by American historian Michael F. Metcalf in the journal *Patterns of Prejudice*.⁴² With the Swiss prohibition as point of departure, Metcalf compares controversies over kosher slaughter in Norway, Sweden, and Denmark in the period 1880 to 1941. Based on secondary literature on the Swiss controversy,⁴³ Metcalf assumes that anti-Semitism was the main motivation behind the Swiss prohibition, and asks whether this was also the case in Scandinavian countries. In Switzerland, the campaign to abolish kosher slaughter gained momentum only after ‘modern anti-Semitism had become accepted in much of the German-speaking world by the end of the 1870s’.⁴⁴ Metcalf then looks briefly into press debates and parliamentary debates in Sweden, Denmark, and Norway, and concludes that concerns for pork exports led Danish MPs to vote down several bills proposing a prohibition of kosher slaughter. Had the requirement of previous stunning been made unconditional with the intention to prohibit kosher slaughtering, other slaughter methods not involving previous stunning would also have been affected, Metcalf observes. Since pork meat slaughtered according to non-stunning methods gained higher prices in markets abroad, Danish MPs dared not to prohibit non-stunning methods, including the Jewish method. This was also the reason why several bills were voted down in Sweden prior to the 1937 prohibition, according to Metcalf.⁴⁵

Although Metcalf’s argument seems reasonable enough for explaining the Danish controversy, his analysis is less convincing with regard to Sweden and Norway. Furthermore, he does not take into account that public debate on the issue never reached the same proportions in Denmark as in Norway, and never became as polarised. Although he acknowledges that the Danish animal protection movement never worked actively for a prohibition of shechita,⁴⁶ this striking difference between the Norwegian and Danish debates

⁴² Metcalf holds a doctorate in Swedish history from Stockholm University, and is currently professor of history at the University of Mississippi.

⁴³ Mainly Külling 1977, see chapter 2.1.

⁴⁴ Metcalf 1989, p. 33.

⁴⁵ Metcalf 1989, p. 45.

⁴⁶ Metcalf 1989, p. 36.

is not considered in his ‘preliminary’ conclusion.⁴⁷ As will be demonstrated in chapter 3.1, precisely this difference is essential to understand the different developments in Norway and Denmark. Instead of looking further into differences in the two animal protection movements’ rhetoric, Metcalf claims that

Whereas the Norwegian debate [...] was couched in blatantly antisemitic terms and led to a rather rapid adoption of anti-shechita legislation in the 1920s, the parallel debates in Denmark and Sweden were tempered by a concern for protecting the so-called Danish-American method of slaughtering pigs.

As we will see later, the adoption of anti-shechita legislation can by no means be characterised as ‘rapid’ in Norway’s case. The slaughter law’s introduction was preceded by a complex process enduring for over 15 years, wherein a range of interests was at work throughout different stages of the controversy. When the proposal finally was adopted by the Storting in 1929, it had already been postponed three times due to concerns over consequences that an absolute requirement of previous stunning would have for Jews. It is also difficult to see how the *lack* of a prohibition in Denmark might explain the Norwegian prohibition. For Metcalf, the lack of similar pork export interests in Norway proves that anti-Semitic rhetoric was decisive, as had been the case in Switzerland. This is hardly a sufficient explanation, and similarities to the Swiss controversy are difficult to see. Apart from certain individuals, there is little suggesting that the Norwegian animal protection movement was mainly motivated by anti-Semitism, as was the case in Switzerland. Rather, the agitation against kosher slaughter fulfilled other functions in the Norwegian movement’s discourse. Furthermore, the comparatively late modernisation of the Norwegian slaughter industry is an important precondition separating the Norwegian controversy from the Swiss and Danish controversies.

The single aspect of the Norwegian controversy that perhaps has gained most scholarly attention is the peasant movement’s role. Kristin Foskum devotes a chapter to the issue in her master’s thesis on the peasant movement’s main organ *Nationen*’s attitudes towards Jews in the period 1926–1938. Her main sources are editorials, since she is mainly interested in the paper’s ‘official’ stance, and to a lesser extent, what submitters wrote.⁴⁸ Although Foskum makes some good observations about editor Thorvald Aadahl’s use of the constitutive ‘us’

⁴⁷ The article was meant as a ‘preliminary look at the Scandinavian debate concerning legislation on the slaughter of animals’, and Metcalf characterises his findings as inconclusive.

⁴⁸ Foskum 2005, p. 37.

and ‘them’, and about notions of Norwegians’ innate kindness to animals,⁴⁹ she fails to relate these statements to the peasant movement’s ideology, to parliamentary debates over shechita, and to other contemporary debates regarding Jews.

The lack of contextualisation has also led to some misinterpretations. Still, her characterisation of *Nationen*’s stance on the issue as anti-Semitic is fairly well underpinned. This impression is reinforced by her emphasis on editor Aadahl’s letting notorious anti-Semites into the columns, and the editor’s use of the Swedish anti-Semitic journal *Vidi* as a source.⁵⁰ The shortcomings of Foskum’s account are mostly due to her somewhat narrow press historical approach. Since her analysis of the kosher slaughter controversy begins in 1926 and ends in 1929, preceding events have not been taken into consideration. In addition, the controversy’s development in other parts of Norwegian public debate, which in turn affected *Nationen*’s coverage, is less visible. Statements from different phases of the controversy are more or less referred to interchangeably, regardless of chronological order.

Although to a much lesser extent, this somewhat narrow perspective also affects historian Kjetil Simonsen’s account of the Peasant Party’s attitudes towards the kosher slaughter issue. In a study on anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and race ideology in the peasant movement in the interwar years, Simonsen also addresses the kosher slaughter controversy. Here he asks to what extent the Peasant Party’s opposition to the Jewish slaughter method was caused by anti-Semitic attitudes. In analysing the issue’s coverage in *Nationen* and a number of other peasant-movement newspapers, Simonsen arrives at the conclusion that peasant-movement agitation in the kosher slaughter controversy falls within a larger pattern of anti-Semitic and nationalist rhetoric that emerged in the movement’s press organs since the founding of the Peasant Party in 1920.⁵¹ Simonsen also observes that the ‘polemics against kosher slaughtering became an integrated part of the campaign leading up to elections to the Storting in 1927’,⁵² but does not look into how these polemics interacted with the other parties’ stance on the issue.

Although Simonsen to a greater extent than Foskum relates *Nationen*’s writings on the issue to parliamentary debates and existing scholarship, even this account is somewhat insufficient

⁴⁹ Foskum 2005, p. 39 and p. 45.

⁵⁰ Foskum 2005, p. 46. *Vidi* was the official organ of the ‘Swedish Anti-Semitic Association’; see Tydén 1986, p. 56ff. and Andersson 2013, p. 729.

⁵¹ Simonsen 2012, p. 23.

⁵² Simonsen 2012, p. 22.

for comprehending the peasant press's motives. Despite the lack of synchronous contextualisation, both studies are important correctives to the historical research on the peasant movement and the Peasant Party. This historiography has only to a limited extent addressed the role of anti-Semitism, xenophobia, and racial biology in the early years of the Party,⁵³ and even to a lesser extent the Party's use of the kosher slaughter controversy in its agitation. These issues will be addressed further in the section on key actors and institutions.

Within other academic fields, the only contribution on the subject is to be found within comparative religious studies. Jon Graawe Forland asks in his master's thesis from 2009 how Norwegian Jewry today relates to debates on slaughtering and killing of animals.⁵⁴ For this purpose, Forland has interviewed five Norwegian Jews, each representing different currents within contemporary western Judaism. However, Forland also addresses the question of why religious slaughter was prohibited in the first place, and looks into debates on the new animal welfare bill in the late 2000s. Based on secondary literature,⁵⁵ Forland also briefly discusses reasons for the 1929 prohibition, but concludes ambiguously that both anti-Semitism and concerns for animals were decisive factors.⁵⁶ Perhaps most interesting for the present dissertation's purpose, Forland's study gives insights into consequences of the prohibition, and how different groups of observant Jews in Norway cope with them today.⁵⁷

Perspectives

Most historical research on kosher slaughter controversies, both internationally and in Norway, has framed the issue within the context of the rise of modern anti-Semitism. This will also be the overarching perspective in this study. However, other aspects of modernity will be outlined as important preconditions for the Norwegian prohibition, relating to notions of civilisation, progress, nationhood, identity, and the concept of humanity. In this sense, the dissertation will be drawing on recent scholarship by the American historian Robin Judd, the German historian Dorothee Brantz, and the Israeli sociologist of law Shai Lavi.⁵⁸ These scholars have in common that they view kosher slaughter controversies not as resulting solely

⁵³ A notable exception from this is Rovde 1997.

⁵⁴ Forland 2009, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Mainly Mendelsohn 1969 and Johansen 1984.

⁵⁶ Forland 2009, p. 28.

⁵⁷ These groups are mainstream orthodoxy, represented by the Mosaic Congregation in Oslo, 'Jewish Renewal', Progressive Judaism, as well as representatives of orthodox or conservative currents outside the Mosaic Congregation (Chabad-Lubavich and others).

⁵⁸ Esp. Brantz 2002, Judd 2003, Lavi 2007, and Lavi 2011.

from the rise of anti-Semitism. By studying the German controversy's early phases, they have also been able to identify a number of other motivations. Judd claims that 'though anti-Semitism was crucial to the narrative of the kosher butchering debates, it alone does not explain the popularity of the deliberations', and identifies other complementary explanations for the obsession with Jewish difference in Imperial and Weimar Germany.⁵⁹ Judd also views the obsession with Jewish particularity as a parallel to the campaign against Catholic difference during the *Kulturkampf*.⁶⁰ In the formative phase of the German controversy, Lavi argues that 'diverse motivations underlying the struggle for slaughterhouse reform were clearly distinguishable, motivations which later would be more uniformly tailored to the demands of Nazi propaganda'.⁶¹ Although the Norwegian controversy never became as unambiguously shrouded in anti-Semitic propaganda as was the later controversy in Germany, a similar approach will also be used in this dissertation. Therefore, approximately equal weight is put on the phase *before* the first parliamentary debates in 1926 as on the period 1926–1929.

Lavi, largely drawing on the empirical works of Brantz and Judd,⁶² sees 19th-century animal protection laws and slaughterhouse reforms as a particularly well-suited case study for discussing the question of what makes modern law and politics 'modern', in the sense that widely different modern phenomena intersected in the struggle for slaughterhouse reform in 19th-century Europe: animal protection, anti-Semitism, and public-health concerns. As Brantz has pointed out before Lavi, all these concerns were occupied with notions of 'the meaning of humanity and progress'; however, 'none of the participants questioned the notion of progress itself'.⁶³ Thus, kosher slaughter controversies shed light on a number of distinctively modern phenomena and on how these interacted.

In his discussion on the concept of modernity, Lavi questions the so-called 'masked animal' hypothesis, that 'life is understood as that which humans share with animals, and politics as that which sets them apart', and in which modernity is understood as the 'humanization of humanity', or the human capacity to overcome animality.⁶⁴ Lavi instead argues that in

⁵⁹ Judd 2003a, p. 136.

⁶⁰ Judd 2003b, p. 256.

⁶¹ Lavi 2006, p. 227.

⁶² Esp. Brantz 2002 and Judd 2003a.

⁶³ Brantz 2002, p. 169.

⁶⁴ Lavi 2006, p. 249.

modernity, both ‘life’ and ‘politics’ are to be understood as processes rather than as fixed terms.⁶⁵ For Lavi, the partially contradictory rationales underlying slaughterhouse reforms represent different understandings of both history and life in modernity. The animal protection movement favoured progressive politics and humanitarian concerns, whereas the anti-Semitic actors had an agenda of ‘counter-modernization along with organic notions of the life of the German people’. Public-health concerns, often represented by veterinaries, were based on the belief that improving animals’ living conditions would benefit humans as much as animals.⁶⁶ Although the present dissertation does not have the same ambition to define modernity as such, Lavi’s analysis of how these phenomena connect and correlate constitutes an interesting perspective that will be applied as a broader framework for understanding the disparate origins of the Norwegian slaughter law and how these motives in some way or another share a common concept of ‘modernity’.

Brantz has pointed out that animal protectionism as it evolved in the 19th century should not be understood in terms of nostalgia for a premodern ‘pastoral’ world where animals and humans lived happily together. Rather, ‘animal protection was understood as an explicit move toward the material and moral advancement of society’.⁶⁷ For the animal protection movement, late 19th-century scientific discoveries made it possible to measure degrees of pain suffered by animals, and thus also degrees of human cruelty towards animals. Lavi argues that for most animal protectionists, the goal was not to eradicate all animal sufferings, but to fight sufferings caused by humans, either for the sake of human improvement or for the sake of animals themselves. In this context, alleviation of animal sufferings was regarded as a sign of progress. Prohibiting traditional slaughter methods, including shechita, and establishing public slaughterhouses were regarded as crucial measures for alleviating animal sufferings caused by humans.⁶⁸

The second current agitating for slaughter reform through animal laws and public slaughterhouses was by no means progressive, but rather reactionary, and was closely related to romantic notions of the German *Volk*. Lavi questions the notion that German anti-Semitic parties’ frequent proposals for prohibitions of kosher slaughtering in the 1890s were merely opportunistic, and suggests that there is a deeper connection between anti-Semitic

⁶⁵ Lavi 2006, p. 225.

⁶⁶ Lavi 2006, p. 229.

⁶⁷ Brantz 2002, p. 176.

⁶⁸ Lavi 2006, p. 233.

interventions in slaughterhouse debates and the anti-Semitic movement's conceptions of life and politics. According to Lavi, the anti-Semitic position 'rejected both the liberal politics of emancipation and the promise of science to diagnose and alleviate animal suffering'. The association of shechita with brutality 'was grounded not in humanitarian concerns with suffering, but rather in the organic unity of the German People and fear of its contamination'.⁶⁹ The rejection of shechita was based on a notion of an idyllic past where German peasants were inseparably attached not only to the soil, but also to animals. This ethos was 'based on a reaction to the process of modernization and an appeal to pre-modern notions of nature, anti-urbanization, [...] embracing, or perhaps inventing, a past in which a closer relationship existed between Man and Nature, humans and animals'.⁷⁰ If Jews were allowed to practice shechita, it was feared that their 'brutality' also could 'infect' the entire population. An objection to Lavi's description of German anti-Semites' anti-shechita agitation as being uninterested in animal welfare as such may be found in certain German animal protectionists' close ties with the anti-Semitic movement, personified in Paul Förster (more on this in the section on Germany below). However, the 'reactionary rationale' outlined by Lavi is still interesting for the Norwegian case, where similar motives are found in the peasant movement's opposition to kosher slaughtering.

Whereas Lavi and Brantz ignore the anti-Semites' genuine interests in animal protection, Judd downplays the role of anti-Semitism altogether, at least until the Weimar period. Judd is more preoccupied with how the majority reacted to Jewish 'difference' or 'particularity',⁷¹ and emphasises that there also was a high degree of support for the German Jews' right to practice shechita. In the German kosher slaughter controversy, Judd shows not only how opposition to shechita functioned as a 'cultural code',⁷² but also how support of shechita played a similar role as a cultural code, expressing religious tolerance and liberal values.⁷³ Although this is an interesting perspective for understanding the comparatively strong opposition in the Reichstag to anti-Semitic agitation against shechita, Judd, as well as Lavi, are at risk of neglecting the

⁶⁹ Lavi 2006, p. 237.

⁷⁰ Lavi 2006, p. 238.

⁷¹ Judd 2007, p. 6. Judd's approach is inspired by the American cultural historian Sander Gilman's works on how Jewish difference was used to justify discrimination, especially through scientific discourses (Judd 2000, pp. 16–17). With a 'new psychohistorical' approach, Gilman has also studied how shechita related to discourses of hygiene and blood; however, this perspective is to a lesser extent relevant for the Norwegian case. See Gilman 1995, pp. 134–157.

⁷² Volkov 1978.

⁷³ Judd 2007, p. 153.

use of kosher slaughtering as a means to stigmatise Jews. Still, the use of kosher slaughtering as a means to define Jews as the fundamental ‘other’ may constitute a fruitful perspective in understanding the Norwegian controversy, especially given the lack of any organised anti-Semitism in Norway.⁷⁴

With the German theoretician of history Reinhard Koselleck’s theory of ‘asymmetric counterconcepts’ as point of departure, German sociologist Klaus Holz has introduced the theory of Jews’ not merely being the ‘other’, but the fundamental, nationless ‘other’, or the ‘third’, as Holz dubs it. As Koselleck and others have pointed out before Holz, group-identification is only possible by defining the ‘other’, usually in negative terms. Koselleck regards language as the place where negative images of the ‘other’ are constructed in order to define a collective subject, more specifically through what he calls counterconcepts.⁷⁵ These concepts are profound cultural interpretative patterns, and without them, social practices, such as discrimination and violent attacks by specific groups, become meaningless.⁷⁶ Holz widens Koselleck’s scope by relating these counterconcepts beyond the context of the nation state. In the modern nation state, Jews are not regarded ‘others’ in the same sense as foreigners ‘belonging’ to other nations, but as an ‘unnational’ group, standing outside the entire system of nation states. Being the ‘third’, Jews not only are strangers within their own countries, but also are regarded a threat to the entire order of nations.⁷⁷ In the Norwegian context, the Jews’ status as being neither proper citizens nor foreigners is highlighted by Jews’ rarely being identified with their countries of origin. While not primarily being regarded as a religious community, hardly any differentiation was made in the Norwegian public sphere between ‘Western’ Jews of German or Danish extraction and ‘Eastern’ Jews, more recently immigrated from Poland and the Baltics. Jews were simply referred to as Jews, irrespective of national origin or religious observance.

Back to Lavi’s typology concerning the discourses defining the German controversy. Whereas the two rationales for slaughter reform described above were based on either progressive Enlightenment ideas or romanticist ideas in reaction to the Enlightenment, the third current underlying slaughter reform was closely related to the emergence of the modern welfare state. A new aspect of the emerging German welfare state was regulation of living conditions to

⁷⁴ Emberland 2005, p. 401.

⁷⁵ Koselleck 2004.

⁷⁶ Holz 2004, p. 46.

⁷⁷ Holz 2004, pp. 44–45.

improve public health and ‘moral environments’. Traditional slaughter methods were criticised for lack of hygiene on one side, and on the other side, for their negative presence in midst of cities, leading to violence and abuse of alcohol. Regulating slaughtering methods and establishing public slaughterhouses were regarded as the solutions to these problems. In some cases, this also meant the prohibition of shechita, but in most German cities and towns, kosher slaughtering was merely regulated, not prohibited.⁷⁸

Thus, more specific in the Norwegian context, rationales for slaughterhouse regulation and demands to prohibit kosher slaughter may be identified as the emerging animal protection movement’s dissemination of new attitudes to animals, as the institutionalisation of the veterinary discipline – and subsequent slaughter reforms for environmental and public health purposes – and lastly as the emergence of agrarian nationalism within the peasant movement. All these aspects of modernity occurred late in Norway compared to Germany and other Western countries, but perhaps more interestingly, they occurred more or less simultaneously in Norway. The kosher slaughter controversy arose when debates about and support for animal protectionism, slaughterhouse reform, agrarian nationalism, and to some extent anti-Semitism reached a peak 1910–1930. Thus, also in Norway, the kosher slaughter issue emerged when these distinct aspects of modernity intersected.

From the early German controversies, Brantz has emphasised the role of grass-roots political mobilisation, and how this mobilisation increasingly gained influence among Reichstag politicians. Animal protectionists insisted on the state’s role in regulating behaviour towards animals, and on the state ‘as guarantor of humanitarian standards and social progress’.⁷⁹ The role of grass-roots mobilisation and state intervention also constitutes an important aspect of the Norwegian controversy. The role of lay associations was a much-contested issue most of the period this dissertation covers, and the changing status of lay opinions is an essential precondition for the outcome of the debates. Emphasising this aspect will make clear how the Norwegian controversy was intertwined with larger societal conflicts around the turn of the century and onwards between new popular movements and conservative elites.⁸⁰ In the conflict between new movements of popular education and the traditional educational elite, or *Bildung* bourgeoisie [dannelsesborgerskap], historian Rune Slagstad identifies a range of

⁷⁸ Lavi 2006, p. 243.

⁷⁹ Brantz 2002, p. 168 and p. 176. These initiatives were welcomed by the authorities, who used such petitions to legitimise the ‘interventionist state that was growing up in Imperial Germany’, according to Brantz.

⁸⁰ Slagstad 1998, p. 129. See also Slagstad 2000, p. 44f. and Slagstad 2004, p. 69ff.

movements and causes such as Low Church movements, prohibitionism, and language movements (the struggle for Landsmål/Nynorsk) – one might also add the animal protection movement.⁸¹

In the German controversies, similar grass-roots groups relied heavily on scientific expertise, a reliance which contributed to frame the debate as mainly within a scientific discourse. The framing of the issue within scientific discourses also forced supporters of kosher slaughter to argue in terms of expert statements, and the American historian John Efron has demonstrated how Orthodox Jews also changed their argumentation by relying more on science.⁸² However, in this regard, Norwegian animal protection associations' anti-shechita agitation differs remarkably from that of their German sister organisations by rejecting the primacy of scientific authority. This difference may be explained by specific political conditions in Norway, and popular movements' distinctive status in the Norwegian 'Liberal Party state', as described by Slagstad. Historian of science and STS-scholar (science and technology studies) Kristin Asdal has demonstrated how the animal protection movement gained hegemony in scientific discourses at the expense of the specialist expertise, such as in the question of vivisection (animal experimentation).⁸³ The same opponents from the vivisection conflict also stood against the animal protection movement in the kosher slaughter controversy, namely the veterinary experts. Thus, Asdal's STS perspective may shed light over crucial preconditions for the kosher slaughter controversy, namely conflicts of hegemony between the animal protection movement and veterinary medicine.

Methodology and Sources

The research questions and theoretical framework outlined in previous paragraphs affect how the Norwegian kosher slaughter affair is approached in this dissertation. To follow the affair's development in its entirety, the dissertation relies not only on parliamentary propositions and debates, but also on extensive archival sources, newspapers, and journals. To describe how kosher slaughtering eventually was regarded negatively in the public sphere, the analysis will focus on representations, stereotypes, modes of argumentation, discourses, semantic fields, concepts, and counterconcepts inherent in these sources. Still, a full-fledged discourse

⁸¹ Asdal 2006.

⁸² Efron 2007. See also Brantz 2002, pp. 180–182.

⁸³ Asdal 2006b.

analysis in the foucaultian sense will not be undertaken,⁸⁴ and the approach is to a greater extent inspired by ‘critical discourse analysis’ and conceptual history.⁸⁵ These methodologies are particularly suited for describing how discourse and social changes are interwoven, and also take into account the socio-economic context which gives the concepts and discourse meaning. The analysis will attempt to identify some of the similar themes and types of argumentation found across newspapers, archival sources, and parliamentary debates. Which notions, images, and stereotypes were taken as given? What made arguments legitimate, valid, and meaningful? Not only ‘extreme’ statements will be examined, but also positive or neutral assessments of kosher slaughtering. This is done to understand how opponents and supporters of shechita, respectively, adjusted their argumentation in order to obtain the discursive hegemony.

The lack of original scholarship on the Norwegian controversy makes it also necessary to give a relatively detailed account of the course of events. For this purpose, archival studies have proven particularly important to unfold some crucial events neglected in existing scholarship. In addition to printed parliamentary debates in *Stortingsforhandling* (‘Negotiations of the Storting’), case documents distributed among Storting members and a large number of petitions directed to the Storting have been found in the archives of the Storting.⁸⁶ Similar petitions were also directed to the government, and have been retrieved in the Ministry of Agriculture’s archives in the National Archives of Norway [Riksarkivet]. These petitions are preserved in one of the four comprehensive, but unarranged bundles regarding the 1929 slaughter law. These bundles also contain most of the ministry’s correspondence, legal drafts and background material on the matter.⁸⁷ Thus, by using this hitherto neglected archive, it has been possible to reconstruct the ministry’s handling of the issue in the long period between the two phases of public debates (1913–1914 and 1926–1929, respectively). Documents in this archive reveal a complex tug of war between the ministry’s political leadership and the bureaucrats in the ministry’s Veterinary Office during Liberal Party politician Haakon Five’s two terms as minister of agriculture in the early 1920s. These documents have also been

⁸⁴ Foucault 1971, p. 53ff.

⁸⁵ Wodak & Reisigl 2001; Landwehr 2008; Koselleck 1979. For the use a similar approach to the British kosher slaughtering controversies in the 1980s, see Klug 1989b.

⁸⁶ Bilag til Stortinget 1927. Diverse II; Stortingets Ekstraktprotokoll, 1926.

⁸⁷ The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet V. Veterinærkontoret, Saksarkiv: Nos. 100–103. A related series is also to be found in The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærdirektoratet/Veterinæravdelingen. Saksarkiv 1826-1983. Avlivning av husdyr og tamrein. Div. mapper. Schächtning.

useful for completing the picture for most of the period studied, and the archive also contains a comprehensive newspaper-clip archive (see below).

Documents in the archives of the Director of Public Prosecutions [Riksadvokaten] in the National Archives and the Regional Public Prosecutor in Oslo [Oslo statsadvokatembeter] in the Regional Archives of Oslo [Statsarkivet i Oslo], respectively, have proven useful in establishing the role of police and prosecuting authorities in the 1914 controversy.⁸⁸ For the controversy in connection with the establishment of the Kristiania Public Slaughterhouse a year earlier, sources in the Oslo City Archives have been consulted,⁸⁹ in addition to the press coverage. A number of smaller, but none the less important archives have also been examined, such as the archives of the Oslo and Trondheim Mosaic Congregations.⁹⁰ Letters regarding the involvement of Fridtjof Nansen and the Jewish Board of Deputies in London have been retrieved from the Collection of Letters and Manuscripts in the National Library of Norway [Nasjonalbiblioteks håndskriftsamling], and some of these are also published in the fifth volume of Nansen's correspondence.⁹¹

For the period prior to 1910, publications of the animal protection movement are the main primary sources. The board of directors of the Kristiania Animal Protection Association published annual reports from 1867 to 1896 containing much information about the Association's activities, both regarding the inner life of the organisation and its external campaigns. From 1897, the Association's monthly (sometimes bi-monthly) magazine *Dyrenes Ven* ('The Animals' Friend'), replaces annual reports, and provides a range of genres, such as short stories, edifying literature, reports of animal cruelty, editorials, letters to the editor, and reports of the movement's activities home and abroad. *Dyrenes Ven* was published as an elegant, illustrated magazine of 8 pages (later 16), and was modelled after the Danish *Dyrevennen*, published in Copenhagen by the animal protectionist and philanthropist J. Chr. Lembcke since 1880.

⁸⁸ The Director of Public Prosecutions [Riksadvokaten]: Ordinært arkiv, journaler og –registre, journal XVIII (11.08.1913–27.06.1914) and The Regional Public Prosecutor of Oslo [Oslo statsadvokatembeter]: Justisprotokoller I: Hovedrekken, 40b (25.04.1913–26.06.1914).

⁸⁹ Records from the City Council [Aktstykker], 1910; Records regarding the municipality of Kristiania in the year 1912 and first half of the year 1913, Document no. 42, 'Forskrifter for Kristiania Slagtehus'; Magistrate's II. Dept., mail journals and outgoing mail 1911–1915.

⁹⁰ Oslo Jewish Museum, Det mosaiske trossamfunns arkiv, Diverse ca. 1892–ca. 1981, 06: Det Mosaiske Trossamfundets Schechita-mappe 1914–1929; Trondheim Jewish Museum, Det mosaiske trossamfunns arkiv.

⁹¹ Kjærheim (ed.) 1978.

Lembcke's *Dyrevennen* ('The Animal Friend') carried the subtitle 'Nordic Illustrated Monthly Journal' [*Nordisk illustreret Maanedsskrift*], and was published simultaneously in Copenhagen by Lehmann & Stage and in Kristiania by Albert Cammermeyer. Apart from occasional reports from Norway, most of the content came from Denmark. Nevertheless, a review in *Aftenposten* in 1891 suggests that the journal was widely known and read in Norway. The journal was praised both for the causes it promoted and for its high quality: 'the magazine is edited with skills rarely seen and with a devout love for the cause, which earns Mr. Lembcke the highest honour'.⁹² *Dyrevennen* has in this dissertation, however, not primarily been examined in order to shed light on the Norwegian animal protection movement's struggle against kosher slaughter. Rather, the main purpose has been to study the different paths taken by the Norwegian and Danish animal protection movements with respect to the kosher slaughter issue (see below for a comparison). Like *Dyrenes Ven*, the magazine of the Women's Animal Protection Association, *Dyrenes Beskytter* ('The Animals' Protector', published from 1901), devoted much space to agitation against shechita, and is together with *Dyrenes Ven* the main source to anti-shechita campaigns until the first press debates around 1910.

In line with the issue's advancing from being an animal-protection-movement cause to becoming a press debate in Kristiania and Trondheim (and eventually a national debate), attention is turned from internal animal-protection-movement publications to newspaper sources. Leading nationwide newspapers published in the capital have been examined systematically for the periods 1910–1914 and 1925–1929. These are the conservatives *Aftenposten*, *Tidens Tegn*, and *Morgenbladet*, the liberal *Dagbladet*, the agrarian *Landmandsposten* (from 1918 under the name *Nationen*), as well as the socialist *Social-Demokraten* (from 1923 *Arbeiderbladet*). In Trondheim, where a local kosher slaughtering debate erupted after the opening of a public slaughterhouse in 1919, the conservative newspaper *Trondhjems Adresseavis*, the liberals *Dagposten* and *Nidaros*, and the socialist *Ny Tid* have been examined for that year. The same newspapers have also been examined for the years 1925–1929.

For the period after the issue entered parliamentary debates, a number of local newspapers have been examined in addition to legislative proposals, committee recommendations, and

⁹² Quoted in *Beretning fra Direktionen for Foreningen til Dyrenes Beskyttelse*, Christiania 1891, p. 59.

minutes from parliamentary meetings. The selection of newspapers has been determined by two factors. First, a number of petitions against kosher slaughtering submitted to the Storting and the Government in 1926–1927 suggest that the opposition to shechita was strongest in the East Country and in the two Trøndelag counties. Second, some of the newspapers appearing in the Ministry of Agriculture's clip archive stand out with regard to quantity and tone. Also here, the concentration of papers in the East Country and Trøndelag is striking, and a number of these papers have been examined systematically for the period 1925–1929. Most prominently among these are the peasant-movement papers *Østlandets Blad* (covering Follo region in Akershus County), *Østlændingen* (eastern parts of Hedmark County), *Vestopland* (western parts of Oppland county), and *Laagen* (Gudbrandsdalen region in Oppland), *Nasjonalbladet* (Trøndelag counties), *Stjørdalen* and *Namdalen* (both Nord-Trøndelag County). In addition, a number of labour-movement papers in the same regions have been systematically examined: *Fremtiden* (published in Drammen in the East Country and the country's second largest Labour Party paper), *Opland Arbeiderblad* (Gjøvik in Oppland), *Arbeideren* (Hamar in Hedmark), *Arbeidets Rett* (southern parts of Sør-Trøndelag and northern parts of Hedmark), *Rjukan Arbeiderblad* (Telemark), and finally *Telemark Kommunistblad* (Skien in Telemark County). More thorough descriptions of the newspapers in question will be given in relevant chapters. Some local Liberal Party and Conservative Party newspapers have also been searched; however, little or no coverage of the affair has been found in these papers.⁹³ Random checks have also been conducted for the most relevant time periods in certain papers published in the southern, western, and northern parts of the country; however, these checks have also proved to be fruitless.

A medium that has not been examined to any great extent are satirical magazines, despite their relatively broad circulation in Norway from late 19th century until the 1930s.⁹⁴ Although previous and ongoing research suggest that these magazines greatly contributed to the dissemination of anti-Semitic stereotypes in Norway from the turn of the century onwards,⁹⁵ a systematic examination of representations of the kosher slaughtering affair in the satirical press would require another theoretical and methodological approach than that chosen for this

⁹³ The liberal papers *Indlandsposten* and *Gudbrandsdølen* and the conservatives *Hamar Stiftstidende* and *Ringerikes Blad*. Also the socialist papers *Hamar Arbeiderblad*, *Smaalenenes Social-Demokrat*, *Romerikes Blad*, and *Vestfold Arbeiderblad* have been searched, although with few findings.

⁹⁴ Berntsen 1999, p. 15.

⁹⁵ Brakstad 2011. Lars Lien of the The Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities in Oslo is currently working on a doctoral dissertation on the construction of the 'Jew' in satirical magazines.

dissertation. Further, hardly any caricatures in the newspapers listed above relate to the kosher slaughter controversy, and there is reason to believe that the controversy only to a limited extent was addressed in satirical magazines.⁹⁶

Although drawing on a large number of newspaper sources, this dissertation is *not* to be understood as merely a press history. The purpose of studying newspapers has not primarily been to determinate the official position of this or that newspaper, but rather to paint a broad canvas of different framings and types of argumentation found in different political and ideological spheres. Therefore, letters to the editor are mostly treated on an equal basis as editorial pieces. However, in certain cases, especially with regard to explaining the stance taken by the political parties during parliamentary debates, editorials are given somewhat more weight. Especially in labour- and peasant-movement press, editorials were more ideologically loyal to the parties than were editorials in the liberal or conservative press.⁹⁷

In the course of the dissertation, parallels will be drawn to the development of similar controversies in other European countries. However, in the chapter on the emergence of anti-shechita agitation in the Norwegian animal protection movement, a more systematic comparison with Denmark and the Danish animal protection movement will be undertaken. While there were close ties between the Nordic animal protection movements, it is striking that the Danish and Norwegian movements ultimately assumed irreconcilable views on kosher slaughtering. The circumstances under which this schism took place are crucial for understanding the formation of the predominately negative position in Norway. This comparison will be descriptive in the sense that it will highlight differences in attitudes towards the Jewish slaughter method in the two countries.⁹⁸ Moreover, social and legal conditions of Danish and Norwegian Jews, respectively, will be contrasted in order to explain Norwegian particularity in the kosher slaughter issue.⁹⁹

Sweden and Finland could also have been included in this comparative analysis. However, since kosher slaughter controversies in these countries developed more similarly to the Norwegian controversy, a comparison with the controversy that developed furthest in the *opposite* direction of the Norwegian is more relevant for shedding new light upon the

⁹⁶ A notable exception may be found in *Vikingen*, No. 3, 1913. See a caricature in *Nationen*, 19.06.1926.

⁹⁷ Ottosen (ed.) 2010, p. 45ff. and Nielsen 1997, p. 222.

⁹⁸ Kocka 1996, p. 199.

⁹⁹ Kocka 1996, p. 202f.

Norwegian controversy. This choice of comparison does not imply that the developments in Sweden and Finland are uninteresting. On the contrary, both these countries adopted a prohibition of shechita (Finland in 1906 and Sweden in 1937), and animal protectionists in these countries went as far, if not further, in attacks on Jews than did animal protectionists in Norway.¹⁰⁰ Still, different political circumstances in Finland (a grand duchy under the Russian tsar) and the similar outcome of the controversy in Sweden (a prohibition in 1937) make Denmark a better case for comparison.

Outline

In a broad sense, part 2 addresses the ideological and institutional background of the Norwegian controversy by looking into similar controversies abroad, especially in German-speaking Europe and the Nordic countries. Thereafter, an overview will be given concerning the different discourses intersecting in the Norwegian controversy. This section will provide background information on anti-Semitic currents and individual actors in Norway from around the turn of the century until 1930. The last section of this part investigates the conflicts between the animal protection movement and scientific experts, especially the government's veterinary authority.

Part 3 addresses the first phase of the Norwegian controversy, the period before the issue was treated by the Storting 1926–1929. The first chapter will demonstrate how the slaughter-reform issue in Norway from the 1860s onwards was transformed into a negative discourse about kosher slaughtering, in contrast to Denmark, where the Jewish slaughter method was framed more positively. In the following chapters, the three local controversies preceding the national debates from 1926 onwards are treated separately. Already during the controversy in Kristiania and Aker in 1913–1914, many of the arguments against shechita later used during the parliamentary debates were put forward for the first time, and the fronts that characterised later debates were formed. Despite positive assessments from veterinary experts, the Kristiania City Council prohibited the Jewish community from practicing shechita in the new public slaughterhouse, and Kristiania Jews were obliged to rent a private slaughterhouse outside the city borders in neighbouring Aker Municipality. The police in Aker reacted by initiating criminal proceedings against the Kristinia Mosaic Congregation's trustee for violation of the penal code's provisions on animal cruelty. However, charges were dropped as

¹⁰⁰ See the section on European shechita controversies and Dirke 2000, p. 199.

the court, in contrast to Kristiania politicians a year earlier, could not ignore the positive expert statements.

Not only does the different outcome of the Aker controversy reveal Kristiania politicians' compliance with animal protectionist demands, thus highlighting the rising status of animal protection. The prosecuting authorities' reactions to the court's decision to drop charges also constitute the first government initiatives to establish a national prohibition of shechita. These initiatives eventually led to the 1929 slaughter law; however, the law's coming into being followed a twisted road. Despite a third conflict in Trondheim in 1919, treated in a separate chapter in part 3, initiatives to prohibit shechita met little interest and understanding in the Ministry of Agriculture's bureaucracy. The last chapter of part 3 demonstrates how the Ministry's Veterinary Office obstructed work on a cabinet ordinance aimed at prohibiting shechita, up until Minister of Agriculture Haakon Five's second term in 1925.

Part 4 examines the political debates leading to the 1929 prohibition. Despite being rejected by the majority of two cabinets and postponed by the Storting on two occasions, former Minister of Agriculture Haakon Five's initial slaughter regulations from 1925, containing an unconditional requirement of previous stunning, was finally passed by the Storting in 1929. In the years between, public debates and parliamentary negotiations on the slaughter bill were mostly concerned with the question of whether an exemption for kosher slaughter should be included in the law. These debates reached a peak during spring and summer 1926, only to be surpassed by new debates in 1927. In the election year 1927, new elements were added to the debate, especially regarding undue interventions of 'international finance Jewry'. The debates of 1926 and 1927 are addressed separately in order to capture the dialectics between press debates and parliamentary debates. The final chapters of part 4 will not only address opinions expressed in the press and from the Storting's rostrum. By looking into party affiliation and constituencies, the dissertation will also attempt to identify factors contributing to the two postponements in 1927 and 1928, respectively, and contributing to the rejection of including an exemption clause for shechita during the final parliamentary debate in 1929. The final part, part 5, will attempt to sum up and characterise the controversy in its entirety, and to identify decisive events and tendencies.

Given the dissertation's emphasis on language and discourse, as well as the fact that most sources are scarcely known to Norwegian readers – to say nothing of an international

readership – primary sources are quoted quite extensively. All translations are made by the author, while some proper names are kept in brackets. In cases of possible ambiguity, original wording is included in brackets. When the Norwegian term *schächtning* is used in primary sources, it is translated as ‘kosher slaughter’. For descriptive and analytical purposes, ‘kosher slaughter’ and ‘shechita’ are used interchangeably for the sake of variation. Names of the larger Norwegian regions has been translated (for instance ‘East Country’ for *Østlandet*), while most other geographical names are kept in original.

Part 2: Ideological and Institutional Background

2.1: European Kosher Slaughter Controversies

There is a comprehensive literature on the various kosher slaughter controversies in Europe, and especially during the last 30 years, there has been a growing interest in the subject in Britain,¹⁰¹ Germany, Switzerland, and, to a lesser extent, the Nordic countries. This section will focus on the debates most relevant to the Norwegian controversy, namely the preceding and contemporary controversies in Switzerland, Germany, Finland, and Sweden. The Danish debates will be addressed more thoroughly in chapter 3.1, and are not included in this section. There are some striking similarities between Norway, Finland, and Saxony, and to a somewhat lesser extent Switzerland and Sweden, in the sense that Jewish communities in these states were small and relatively newly immigrated.

In Norway, Jews were first allowed to settle in 1851 when paragraph two of the 1814 Constitution, which prohibited their entry, was abolished. Although hundreds of Jewish immigrants, mainly from Eastern Europe, had settled by the turn of the century, the size of the Jewish minority never exceeded a few thousand individuals.¹⁰² In Sweden, Jews had been allowed to settle already in the 17th century, and the first Jewish religious congregation was founded in 1780. Jewish settlement had, however, been restricted to certain towns. In the course of the 19th century, restrictions were progressively lifted, until Jews in 1870 received full civil rights in Sweden.¹⁰³ Although Finland had been part of Sweden until 1809, restrictions on Jewish settlement remained until Finland's independence from Russia in 1917. Nevertheless, a few hundred Jews had been allowed to settle in Finland during the 19th century, mainly Jewish soldiers in the Russian army. Still, by the turn of the century, less than a thousand Jews lived in Finland, and some 1,500 by 1920.¹⁰⁴

In the German context, the Kingdom of Saxony had a comparatively small Jewish population. In the early modern era, there had been no Jewish communities in Saxony; however, from the late 18th century, Jews had been settling in larger cities, mainly Leipzig and Dresden. Still,

¹⁰¹ Klug 1989a; Klug 1989b; Kushner 1989; Alderman 1993; Kaye 1993; Burt 2006; MacLachlan 2008.

¹⁰² Gjernes 2007, p. 33ff.

¹⁰³ Berggren 1999, pp. 86–87.

¹⁰⁴ Kuparinen 2008, p. 113.

the number of Saxon Jews remained only a few thousand throughout the 19th century. Despite this, a strong anti-Semitic movement emerged in the late 19th century.¹⁰⁵ Switzerland had a Jewish presence since the Middle Ages, but severely restricted Jewish settlement. Jews were allowed to live only in certain towns in German-speaking cantons, and numbered only a few thousands during most of the 19th century. Despite this, an anti-Semitic movement flourished in Switzerland in the mid 19th century, mainly in reaction to Jewish emancipation.¹⁰⁶ In these anti-Semitic currents, the question of kosher slaughtering played a crucial role.

Switzerland – ‘*Schächtfrage als Judenfrage*’

Shechita has been practiced in Europe as long as there have been Jews in Europe. Even though restrictions and prohibitions on the practice mainly appear in the 19th and 20th centuries, the Jewish slaughter method had been an object for mockery and ridicule since the Middle Ages, and had even been associated with accusations of ritual murder.¹⁰⁷ However, it was not until the mid 1800s that the first ‘modern’ shechita controversy erupted in Switzerland. The initial complaints about shechita, appearing in some of the cantons bordering Germany in the 1850s, have been viewed by historians as a counter reaction to the emancipation of Swiss Jewry. An increasing number of cantons lifted restrictions on Jewish settlement and on establishment of Jewish religious congregations in the 1850s and 1860s. This wave of emancipation was in local communities often met with verbal attacks on Jews, most often in the form of opposition to shechita. A common notion in these cantons was that Jews, after having been emancipated, were obliged to adapt their behaviour and worship to those of the Christian majority.¹⁰⁸ When Jewish communities objected to this by referring to the Swiss Constitution’s provisions on religious freedom, they were accused of exploiting liberal legislation to their own benefit, and for refusing to integrate into the nation. Furthermore, the Swiss animal protection movement pointed out that the constitution recognised religious freedom only as long as religious worship did not offend morality and public order [Sittlichkeit und öffentliche Ordnung].¹⁰⁹

Whereas the criticism of the Jewish slaughter method in the 1850s and 1860s had sprung out of a liberal mindset, and in this sense belongs to what has been labelled ‘Frühantisemitismus’

¹⁰⁵ Piefel 2004. See also Schäbitz 2006 for the history of Saxon Jewry.

¹⁰⁶ Külling 1977.

¹⁰⁷ Efron 2007, p. 182. See also Efron 2001, p. 207.

¹⁰⁸ Mesmer 1998, pp. 218–220.

¹⁰⁹ Mesmer 1998, p. 220.

in German-speaking Europe, or perhaps ‘anti-Semitism of tolerance’ in English,¹¹⁰ a new phase in the Swiss controversy emerged from the 1880s. As influences from the emerging German anti-Semitic movement reached Switzerland, the argumentation against shechita took an unambiguously more hateful tone.¹¹¹ If the aim in the wake of Jewish emancipation had been to prohibit Jews’ divergent religious practices, and to demand that Jews assimilate, the agitation against shechita in the 1880s was increasingly aimed at excluding Jews from society altogether.¹¹² In this phase, the campaign against kosher slaughtering also became associated with campaigns against animal experimentation (vivisection), and the anti-vivisectionists’ strong distrust and agitation against modern science also benefited the campaign against kosher slaughter. This hostility towards science caused scientific statements on the humane character of shechita to be easily dismissed as being biased, and caused accusations that they were written by Jews or on behalf of Jews.¹¹³

As anti-Semitism increasingly was becoming socially acceptable in these years, most opposition to anti-shechita campaigns within the Swiss animal protection movement disappeared. Simultaneously, the Tisza-Ezslár ritual-murder affair in Hungary in 1883 accentuated in Swiss public debate accusations of Jewish cruelty – Swiss historian Friedrich Külling has even characterised the kosher slaughter controversy as a surrogate for ritual-murder stories.¹¹⁴ After the 1883 international animal protection congress in Vienna had condemned shechita and demanded that obligatory pre-stunning slaughter be implemented universally, animal protection movements in different Swiss cantons, predominantly German-speaking, launched a campaign for a national prohibition of kosher slaughter. In these years, Jewish communities also mobilised against the agitation, and increasingly applied scientific arguments in their defence of shechita, while also striving to improve preparations and casting.¹¹⁵ Despite pleas from parliament and government, animal protectionists succeeded in obtaining enough signatures for a plebiscite on a constitutional amendment stating that slaughter animals unconditionally had to be stunned before being killed. The proposal gained a clear majority in the German-speaking cantons, but just barely the majority of the cantons.

¹¹⁰ Bergmann 2010 and Williams 1985.

¹¹¹ Mesmer 2007, p. 188 and Mesmer 1998, p. 223.

¹¹² Mesmer 1998, p. 234.

¹¹³ Külling 1977, p. 295 and Mesmer 1998, p. 224.

¹¹⁴ Külling 1977, pp. 333–337 and Mesmer 1998, p. 226.

¹¹⁵ Mesmer 1998, pp. 227–228; see also Efron 2007.

Historians have noted the striking fact that a majority in all French-speaking cantons and border cantons to the south rejected the proposal.¹¹⁶

The shechita plebiscite was in fact the first instance where the Swiss constitution's provisions allowing constitutional amendments through plebiscites were used.¹¹⁷ Three groups of voters in the 1893 plebiscite were decisive for the victory of anti-Semitic animal activists: 'naïve animal lovers', liberals opposed to 'special laws for Jews', and 'those hostile to Jews'.¹¹⁸ However, the Swiss animal protection movement repeatedly claimed it was not anti-Semitic, and insisted that the demand for pre-stunning slaughtering was not aimed primarily at the Jewish slaughter method.¹¹⁹ Swiss historian Beatrix Mesmer convincingly argues that in the last phase leading up to the 1893 plebiscite, there can be no doubt not only that the animal protection movement's rhetoric was anti-Semitic, but also that the struggle itself was motivated by anti-Semitism.¹²⁰ In fact, most scholarly literature on the Swiss prohibition agrees on the intimate connection between animal protection activism and anti-Semitism in 19th-century Switzerland.¹²¹ The Swiss animal protection movement has even been characterised as an 'influential and leading anti-Semitic actor'.¹²² Even contemporary observers agreed that because of a lack of anti-Semitic parties in Switzerland, the Swiss animal protection movement played a role similar to that of anti-Semitic parties in Germany.¹²³ After a brief exemption from the stunning requirement during the First World War because of difficulties with kosher meat imports, animal protectionists stirred up the issue again in 1920, but this time mainly as a means to scare off unwelcome Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe.¹²⁴ Swiss legal historian Pascal Krauthammer has shown how the issue continued to be used in anti-Semitic propaganda throughout the interwar years and beyond.¹²⁵

¹¹⁶ Mesmer 1998, p. 233. See also Efron 2007, pp. 174–175.

¹¹⁷ Mesmer 1998, p. 215.

¹¹⁸ Mesmer 1998, p. 233 and Mesmer 2007, p. 191.

¹¹⁹ Külling 1977, p. 332 and Mesmer 1998, p. 232.

¹²⁰ Mesmer 1998, p. 230 and Mesmer 2007, p. 190.

¹²¹ Weldler-Steinberg 1970, Külling 1977, Mesmer 1998, Krauthammer 2000, and Efron 2007.

¹²² Petry 2011, p. 370.

¹²³ Mesmer 2007, p. 189 and Külling 1977, p. 361ff.

¹²⁴ Mesmer 2007, p. 192. Külling 1977, p. 346 shows that this motive had already been in place in the earlier phases of the controversy.

¹²⁵ Krauthammer 2000, esp. chapters E, F, and H. Paradoxically, after the Second World War, the fear of arousing anti-Semitic feelings has been used as an argument against allowing shechita in Switzerland (Krauthammer 2000, p. 208ff.).

Germany: Anti-Semitic Activism and Political Tolerance

Although Switzerland's kosher slaughter prohibition could be introduced largely because of the country's unique political system, the debates leading up to the prohibition were by no means unique to Switzerland. Most prominent are the German debates from the 1880s up until the national prohibition of shechita decreed by the Nazi regime on April 21, 1933. In fact, this was the first anti-Semitic law introduced by the Nazi regime, well before the Nuremberg laws of 1935. American historian Robin Judd has demonstrated how debates on kosher slaughtering were instrumental for paving the Nazis' way into politics in the late 1920s.¹²⁶ Agitation against kosher slaughtering, however, remained a part of the Third Reich's anti-Semitic propaganda, perhaps most famously through a scene in the film 'Der ewige Jude' from 1940.¹²⁷

Although the 1933 law banned shechita on a national level in Germany, there existed several local prohibitions before 1933, either in the form of local police ordinances, or as individual state legislation. For instance, a kosher slaughter prohibition was in force in the Kingdom of Saxony from 1892 until 1910, while the Bavarian *Landtag* adopted a prohibition in 1930. Still, research on local German *Schächtverbote* up to the 1930s is still fairly limited. Especially regarding the Saxon prohibition, more research would have been of great benefit for this dissertation, not only because this prohibition coincided chronologically with the formative phase of the Norwegian controversy, but also because Norwegian opponents of shechita frequently referred to the Saxon prohibition. Regarding Saxony, Beatrix Mesmer explains the lack of research as due to the fact that kosher slaughtering debates were comparatively marginal in Germany.¹²⁸ On the other hand, Robin Judd points out that studying the German shechita controversies may contribute to 'complicate our understanding of acculturation and minority integration in Germany'.¹²⁹

Despite the lack of a comprehensive study of the Saxon controversies, it is possible to draw a general picture of the German debates from Judd's and other scholars' research in recent

¹²⁶ Judd 2007, p. 18.

¹²⁷ Sax 2000, chapter 13 and Judd 2007, chapter 6, esp. from p. 215. For the German *Schächtverbot* and its compliance during and after the war, see Jentzsch 1998. For comparisons between kosher slaughter controversies and recent debates over Muslim religious slaughter in Germany, see Lavi 2009 and Gilman 2006, p. 94ff.

¹²⁸ Mesmer 1998, p. 215

¹²⁹ Judd 2003a, p. 119.

years.¹³⁰ A petition submitted by the German *Verband* of animal protection associations to the *Reichstag* in 1886 marks the beginning of agitation against kosher slaughtering in Germany, according to Dorothee Brantz. Curiously, the petition did not criticise the Jewish slaughter method as such, merely the preparations.¹³¹ As new stunning devices were invented, the animal protection movement became increasingly concerned about requiring previous stunning, and Judd claims that these demands arose through influence from abroad, most prominently the Swiss debates.¹³² Contrary to the Swiss debates, however, until the 1890s, demands for stunning methods ‘tended not to target the Jewish method of slaughter’, and most places where slaughter reform was implemented, shechita was exempted from the requirement of previous stunning.¹³³

Still, the 1886 petition was met with counter petitions from Jewish communities and their supporters, as well as from butcher guilds.¹³⁴ When the issue was debated in the *Reichstag* in 1887, most parties admitted that the state was bound to intervene in slaughter practices, even if this meant interfering in rural practices or in the butchery profession. However, when religious practice also was affected, such interference became problematic, and especially the Catholic Centre Party, having the *Kulturkampf* of the 1870s fresh in mind, insisted on protecting the Jewish slaughter method. On the other hand, the anti-Semitic representative Otto Böckel insisted that the Jews adapt to German customs.¹³⁵ Despite Böckel’s being met with opposition from most parties, the *Reichstag* decided neither to prohibit nor to protect shechita, but to await legislation in individual states.

On the local level, Judd has observed an acceptance of shechita, or perhaps rather a disinterest, which, however, disappeared in the 1890s. Local authorities increasingly limited or prohibited shechita, and a new discourse on the issue evolved beyond animal protectionist circles. The most notable restriction was adopted in the Kingdom of Saxony in 1892, where a new law on slaughtering effectively outlawed shechita. Judd claims that the law ‘did not

¹³⁰ Judd 2003a, Judd 2007, Brantz 2002, Lavi 2007, Lavi 2009, and Lavi 2011. Judd 2003b is more concerned with Jewish responses. Avraham Barkai (2002) also addresses the issue several times in his book on the *Centralverein*. On literary representations of shechita (esp. Franz Kafka), see Gilman 1995, pp. 134–156. There also exist several works within the fields of jurisprudence and legal history, most prominently Jentzsch 1998 (for the 1933 prohibition), Potz et al. 2001, and Schwarz 2003.

¹³¹ Brantz 2002, p. 175.

¹³² Judd 2003a, p. 120.

¹³³ Judd 2003a, p. 122.

¹³⁴ Brantz 2002, pp. 177–183.

¹³⁵ Brantz 2002, pp. 185–186.

specifically target or address Saxon Jewry',¹³⁶ while British historian Peter Pulzer has viewed the Saxon prohibition in connection with other anti-Semitic measures taken by the Saxon government in this period, for instance the exclusion of Jews from civil service.¹³⁷ American historian Richard S. Levy, on the other hand, claimed that Saxony prohibited kosher slaughtering 'in order to discourage the immigration of orthodox *Ostjuden*'.¹³⁸ In a recent study of Saxon-Jewish history, German historian Michael Schäbitz claims that the Saxon prohibition was politically motivated against Jews, although the law itself was not justified by anti-Semitic rhetoric.¹³⁹ Neither of these somewhat conflicting explanations are discussed to any greater extent by the scholars mentioned above, and the lack of a comprehensive study of the Saxon prohibition is perhaps due to the insignificant number of Jews living Saxony around the turn of the century. Still, if anti-Semitism indeed caused the prohibition, the modest size of Saxon's Jewish population makes the prohibition even more interesting.

Despite hesitating to label the Saxon prohibition an anti-Semitic law, both Brantz and Judd admit that the rhetoric against kosher slaughter changed significantly in this period.¹⁴⁰ The anti-shechita propaganda increasingly invoked myths of ritual murder, of Jewish bloodthirstiness, of deviant sexuality, and of poor hygiene among Jews.¹⁴¹ It was far from coincidental that a shochet was one of the prime suspects in the Konitz ritual-murder affair in 1900.¹⁴² Judd views the obsession with blood as part of an increasing concern with blood within science, and not least within German nationalism and racist ideology around the turn of the century. Jews were also accused of profiting from their alleged high rate of slaughter and for earning money from selling infected meat.¹⁴³ For an explanation of this discursive change, Judd points to the major social, economic, and demographic changes of the 1890s, the emergence of a chauvinistic discourse, and authorities' increasing concerns with public health and morality and with controlling previously unregulated spheres of society.¹⁴⁴ Still, anti-shechita campaigns had relatively little impact in Germany. With the exception of Saxony,

¹³⁶ Judd 2003b, p. 251. See also Judd 2003a, p. 118 and Brantz 2002, p. 187.

¹³⁷ Pulzer 1976, p. 173.

¹³⁸ Levy 1975, p. 96. See also Pötzsch 2000, p. 282.

¹³⁹ Schäbitz 2006, p. 284ff.

¹⁴⁰ Brantz 2002, p. 189.

¹⁴¹ Judd 2003a, pp. 124–125.

¹⁴² Smith 2002, p. 101ff.

¹⁴³ Judd 2007, pp. 125–127.

¹⁴⁴ Judd 2003a, pp. 123–124. See also Brantz 2002 pp. 176–177.

prohibitions of shechita were introduced in only 22 (Prussian) towns out of the hundreds of towns where the issue had been raised.¹⁴⁵

Judd explains the failure of anti-shechita campaigns as due to the relatively strong position of religious freedom in the minds of legislators.¹⁴⁶ The anti-Semitic parties, having experienced electoral growth and having won sixteen seats in the 1893 general elections, brought up the issue in the *Reichstag* on several occasions throughout the 1890s, only to be met with rejection. Most of the Catholic Centre Party, National Liberal Party, and Social Democratic Party members of the *Reichstag* viewed a prohibition of shechita as a discriminatory measure targeted at the Jewish population. Brantz observes that ‘clearly, the issue had become a rhetorical battleground for political conflicts that had little to do with the protection of animals but much with the spread of antisemitism’.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, Judd in fact claims that defence of religious toleration became a ‘cultural code’, alongside anti-Semitism: ‘Both ideologies allowed participants to position themselves with other groups in the political arena and to insist on their own political prestige’.¹⁴⁸ Brantz concludes that ‘The late nineteenth-century debates were not an endorsement of anti-Semitism. To the contrary, they attested to the rejection of anti-Semitic sentiments in the *Reichstag*’.¹⁴⁹ Also Efron notes that ‘It is striking that while the level of anti-shehitah [*sic*] agitation increased in the late nineteenth century, so too did German legislative protection of the practice’.¹⁵⁰

Regarding the German animal protection movement’s anti-shechita campaigns in the 1890s, Brantz claims that anti-Semitism was not the primary motive for slaughter reform, and that anti-Semitic parties and agitators merely used the case for their own purposes.¹⁵¹ However, by claiming this, Brantz seemingly underestimates the existence of close ties between the anti-Semitic movement and parts of the animal protection movement. One of the most prominent critics of the Jewish slaughter method in Germany was the animal protectionist Paul Förster, who was elected to the *Reichstag* for the anti-Semitic Deutschsozialen Partei from 1893 to

¹⁴⁵ Judd 2007, pp. 128129.

¹⁴⁶ Judd 2007, p. 16.

¹⁴⁷ Brantz 2002, pp. 189–191.

¹⁴⁸ Judd 2007, p. 153.

¹⁴⁹ Brantz 2002, p. 192.

¹⁵⁰ Efron 2007, p. 176.

¹⁵¹ Brantz 2002, p. 191.

1898.¹⁵² In the animal protection movement, Förster was primarily concerned with the campaign against vivisection, and was head of the Internationalen Vereins zur Bekämpfung der Wissenschaftlichen Tierfolter. Förster and other members of the anti-Semitic parties in the Reichstag agitated against vivisection and kosher slaughtering, which both were considered to be expressions of a specific form of Jewish animal cruelty.¹⁵³ From the turn of the century onwards, Brantz goes further than Judd in admitting that also the German *Verband* of animal protection associations increasingly was promoting anti-Semitic campaigns against shechita.¹⁵⁴

The Great War took away most attention from kosher slaughter debates, but the issue received renewed interest during the Weimar Republic. The Weimar period also marks a shift in the controversy, and Judd argues against seeing the previous controversies as antecedents to the 1933 prohibition. Until 1924, the issue attracted limited interest, and the attention was mostly devoid of anti-Semitic sentiment. As they were during the Imperial period, authorities were most often deaf to animal protection associations' demands. Despite the rise of anti-Semitism in this period, few restrictions on shechita were introduced. Judd explains that this was due to authorities' being more preoccupied with securing food deliveries during the inflationary years. In addition, anti-Semitic groups had not yet been able to become politically empowered or organised.¹⁵⁵ With the economic and political stabilisation from 1924, animal protection associations and local authorities again took interest in the *Schächtfrage*, but failed to translate popular demands into legislation. During the late 1920s, the issue again became a potent political question. New groups took interest in the debates, most notably groups of National Socialists, together with other chauvinist and nationalist parties, especially in Bavaria.¹⁵⁶

In fact, Judd claims that the kosher slaughter issue was instrumental in the rise of the National Socialist movement: 'Municipal animal protection campaigns offered the Nazis a platform and an opportunity for political participation; in some areas, the kosher butchering question

¹⁵² Paul Förster (1844–1925) and his brother Bernhard Förster (1843–1889) were leading figures in the German anti-Semitic movement, and were two of the initiators of the so-called 'Antisemitenpetition' in 1880/81. They were also associated with the 'Bayreuther Kreis', the *völkisch* nationalist circle around Richard Wagner.

¹⁵³ Gilman 1995, p. 137; Zerbel 1993, p. 141 and p. 157; Kraus 2009, p. 238; and Dirke 2000, p. 198. For the Nordic reception of Förster's anti-shechita agitation, see also *Dyrenes Ven* 1907, p. 93.

¹⁵⁴ Brantz 2002, p. 191.

¹⁵⁵ Judd 2007, pp. 196–200.

¹⁵⁶ Judd 2007, pp. 200–203.

provided local Nazis with an entry into the formal political sphere'.¹⁵⁷ The *Schächtfrage* thus made radically anti-Semitic views acceptable within mainstream political arenas.¹⁵⁸ In Nazi propaganda, the 'ritual' was described as foreign, if not hostile to German culture: 'The rite, they insisted, was "Asiatic", allegedly constituting a "foreign world, an angry sick fantasy"'.¹⁵⁹ In Bavaria, opposition to shechita was also linked to anxieties over the immigration of Eastern European Jews ('Ostjuden'). Opponents of shechita argued that by allowing kosher slaughtering, the state attracted Eastern Europeans Jews.¹⁶⁰ Although the Bavarian Landtag adopted a *Schächtverbot* already in 1926, the state government was reluctant to implement the prohibition, fearing to conflict with national legislation on religious freedom, as well as being unwilling to yield to Nazi demands. In 1930, the state minister finally agreed to implement the law, awaiting intervention from Berlin.¹⁶¹ However, with the increasing influence of the Nazi Party, an intervention from above never arrived, and Bavaria thus became the first German state where the Nazis succeeded to prohibit shechita.¹⁶²

Finland: Anti-Semitism or Anti-Russian Sentiments?

For the early phase of the Norwegian controversy, the Finnish prohibition of shechita, lasting from 1909 to 1913, is perhaps the most relevant legislation, in the sense that Norwegian animal protectionists frequently highlighted the Finnish prohibition as an example to follow. Unfortunately, the English-, German-, and Swedish-language historical scholarship on Finnish Jewry hardly mentions the prohibition.¹⁶³ Not even the entry on Finland in the renowned reference work *Handbuch des Antisemitismus* mentions the prohibition. On the contrary, the author claims that early 20th century debates in Finland on the 'Jewish question' never involved any institutionalised anti-Semitism.¹⁶⁴ However, from what is known about the history of Finnish Jewry in general, together with reports from Finland in Norwegian animal protection journals, it is possible to sketch out the context of the prohibition. The Russian tsar had in 1902 decreed previous stunning mandatory for slaughtering of livestock within the Grand Duchy of Finland. Much to the resentment of the Finnish animal protection movement, the tsar exempted the Jewish slaughter method from these regulations the following year (in

¹⁵⁷ Judd 2007, p. 195.

¹⁵⁸ Judd 2007, p. 205.

¹⁵⁹ Judd 2007, p. 206.

¹⁶⁰ Judd 2007, pp. 206–208.

¹⁶¹ Judd 2007, pp. 212–215.

¹⁶² For more on the path to the national prohibition, see Judd 2007 p. 215ff.

¹⁶³ See for instance Hakkarainen 2002, Harviainen 1985, Harviainen 1988, and Harviainen 2000.

¹⁶⁴ Kuparinen 2008, p. 113.

1903). However, after the animal protection movement had gained the Finnish Senate's support for its struggle against the exemption, the tsar suspended the exemption in 1909. In effect, shechita was outlawed in Finland from 1909 until 1913.

The success of the campaign against kosher slaughtering in Finland seems to have been connected with the struggle for independence from Russia. The 1903 exemption for kosher slaughter took place during the government of the much-resented Russian governor Nikolay Bobrikov, and the Finnish animal protection movement claimed that Jews had gained from the 'extraordinary circumstances' prevailing in Finland under Bobrikov's rule.¹⁶⁵ Whether or not this was the case, the political climate in Finland was less favourable to the Jewish community than was the case in Norway. As descendants of Russian soldiers, the Jews of Finland were often associated with the Russian rulers, and the Finnish historian Tapani Harviainen claims that negative attitudes against Jews more often were caused by a 'conservative protectionism in addition to a general nationalist xenophobia and intolerance towards Russians' than by anti-Semitism.¹⁶⁶ Still, in animal protectionist circles, Jewish protests were met with vehement anti-Jewish rhetoric, and accusations of Jewish subversive forces were put forward by Agnes von Konow, a leading member of the Finnish animal protection movement.¹⁶⁷

Sweden: Economic Considerations over Animal Concerns?

Although there had been previous attempts to introduce a bill in the Swedish *Riksdag* making previous stunning mandatory, it was first after the Finnish slaughter law of 1902 that shechita was targeted explicitly in an interpellation in the Riksdag. Inspired by the new Finnish law (where shechita had not yet been exempted) MP Edvard Wavrinsky argued that the Jewish slaughter method was the most important reason to adopt a slaughter law with mandatory previous stunning.¹⁶⁸ In his interpellation, Wavrinsky referred to the journal *Djurskyddet*, which Michael Metcalf in his study of the Scandinavian kosher slaughter controversies refers to as 'the magazine of the Swedish animal protection movement'.¹⁶⁹ In her dissertation on the Swedish animal protection movement, Karin Dirke refers to the editor of *Djurskyddet*, F. A.

¹⁶⁵ Agnes von Konow: 'Den jødiske Schächtning forbudt i Finland' in *Dyrenes Beskytter* No. 1 1910, p. 10.

¹⁶⁶ Harviainen 1988, p. 54.

¹⁶⁷ Agnes von Konow: 'Den jødiske Schächtning forbudt i Finland' in *Dyrenes Beskytter* No. 1 1910, p. 10. See also Metcalf 1989, p. 47, note 42.

¹⁶⁸ Nilsson & Svanberg 1997, p. 73.

¹⁶⁹ Metcalf 1989, p. 40.

Wingborg, as ‘the most anti-Semitic–inclined animal friend’ among Swedish animal protectionists, but claims that Wingborg and his journal had few followers in the Swedish animal protection movement.¹⁷⁰

Dirke generally finds little anti-Semitism in the mainstream of the Swedish animal protection movement.¹⁷¹ She regards the lack of anti-Semitism in the Swedish movement as being a result of Jews being a relatively well-integrated part of the urban middle class, the same class most animal protectionists belonged to. Instead, the main conflict in slaughter reform struggles was between the predominantly urban animal protectionists and the rural population. In this context, the Jewish slaughter method was regarded as superior to traditional slaughter methods used in the Swedish countryside.¹⁷²

However, given that Wingborg’s anti-Semitic outbursts in *Djurskyddet* resulted in a Riksdag interpellation, the Swedish animal protection movement’s anti-Semitic component should not be completely dismissed. Dirke also seems to overestimate the rejection of kosher slaughtering in the ‘mainstream’ movement. Many articles in Swedish animal protection journals regarding the Jewish slaughter method found their way into Norwegian animal protection journals, and were used in anti-shechita agitation. As will be demonstrated in chapter 3.1, the early Norwegian discourse on shechita was characterised by exclusionary images of Jewish cruelty, although usually not as explicitly anti-Semitic as in Wingborg’s writings. Regardless of this, Wavrinsky’s interpellation and later anti-shechita bills proposed by other MPs found little resonance in the Riksdag until the 1920s. In 1922, a bill specifically targeted on prohibiting shechita was presented by Edvard Lithander, who previously had spoken against Jewish immigration in clearly anti-Semitic terms.¹⁷³ This initiative, together with half a dozen other private bills on humanisation of slaughter, led the cabinet to propose a new slaughter law in 1927. The 1927 bill, however, included an exemption from the requirement of previous stunning for shechita, for Sami reindeer slaughter, and for the so-called Danish-American method of pig slaughter.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ Dirke 2000, p. 199.

¹⁷¹ Dirke 2000, p. 196.

¹⁷² Dirke 2000, p. 199.

¹⁷³ Nilsson & Svanberg 1997, p. 73. Lithander’s father Pehr Emanuel Lithander (1835–1913) was one of Sweden’s early anti-Semitic politicians (Tydén 1986, p. 23).

¹⁷⁴ Nilsson & Svanberg 1997, p. 74 and Metcalf 1989, p. 41.

The latter method consisted of the animal (usually pigs) being hoisted by its hind legs on a chain, before the butcher stabbed it in the heart, thus making it bleed to death efficiently hanging upside-down. This method allowed the butcher to slaughter a large number of pigs in a short time, since the hoisted pigs were driven along an assembly line. Not only was this method more efficient than the stunning method – it also allowed pigs to bleed while still alive, in accordance with the belief that this would improve the meat's quality. The reason for this method's being exempted in the bill was the claim that a prohibition might hurt Swedish pork and bacon exports to Britain. However, by protecting one method not involving stunning, the Riksdag could hardly prohibit another. Metcalf argues that this was the reason why shechita was also protected in the 1927 proposal and in later proposals in the early 1930s.¹⁷⁵ Metcalf sees evidence for this claim in the fact that it was only after the British prohibited the Danish-American slaughter method that a slaughter law prohibiting both the Jewish and the Danish-American methods was introduced in Sweden.¹⁷⁶

While this might have been the case, it is an insufficient explanation for why the Riksdag refused to include an exemption for shechita when the law was finally passed in 1937. Expert statements had been divided over the question of whether kosher slaughtering involved unnecessary pain.¹⁷⁷ Furthermore, the Riksdag chose to include an exemption from previous stunning for the Sami slaughter method. Metcalf admittedly points out that the Norwegian and German prohibitions might have contributed to the almost unanimous decision not to exempt shechita in 1937. Swedish ethnologists Åsa Nilsson and Ingvar Svanberg, on the other hand, emphasise the anti-Semitic arguments in the Riksdag debates on kosher slaughtering in the 1920s and 1930s. Similarly, Swedish historian Mattias Tydén points out the 'peculiar motivation' behind the prohibition. Tydén quotes the minister of justice, who admitted that although there were highly divided opinions on kosher slaughter, the method should not be exempted, due to the 'disgusting and crude impression' it made on onlookers.¹⁷⁸

The force of the anti-shechita arguments is also confirmed by the exemption of Sami reindeer slaughter. The Riksdag decided not to prohibit this method, due to difficulties of implementing a prohibition, and the Sami's stubbornness and 'conservative character'. Tydén also views this as a clear case of Jews' being treated as 'foreigners', as opposed to how the

¹⁷⁵ Metcalf 1989, p. 41.

¹⁷⁶ Metcalf 1989, p. 42.

¹⁷⁷ Nilsson & Svanberg 1997, p. 73.

¹⁷⁸ Tydén 1990, p. 83. See also Tydén 1988, p. 265.

Sami were treated.¹⁷⁹ The scholarly contributions on the Swedish prohibition seem to agree on the role of anti-Semitism in the political debate, along with genuine concern for animal welfare among most animal protectionists.¹⁸⁰ Still, the Swedish controversy has only to a limited extent been discussed in relation to other contemporary anti-Semitic currents. However, a more thorough examination of the Swedish kosher slaughter controversy is beyond the scope of this dissertation.¹⁸¹

2.2: Anti-Semitic Currents and Actors in Norway c. 1910–1930

For Michael Metcalf, the anti-Semitic component is even more present in the Norwegian controversy than in Sweden, while Per Ole Johansen has related the Norwegian opposition to shechita to the discriminatory government policies towards Jews in the interwar years. As mentioned in the historiography section, both these hypotheses are somewhat weakly founded – Metcalf bases his claim of a strong anti-Semitic component in the Norwegian controversy on similarities with the Swiss controversy, while Johansen bases much of his argument on one leading police officer's anti-shechita agitation. Therefore, it would be prudent to look into the character of Norwegian anti-Semitism before evaluating its impact in the kosher slaughter controversy. This section will also address some of the anti-Semitic actors participating in the kosher slaughter controversy, as well as other contemporary anti-Semitic affairs in Norway, in order to say something about the 'anti-Semitic' climate surrounding the kosher slaughter controversy.

Historian of religion and researcher at the Centre for Studies of Holocaust and Religious Minorities in Oslo Terje Emberland has characterised anti-Semitism 'in its ideological developed and organised form' as a relatively marginal phenomena in Norway prior to the Second World War. Compared to continental Europe, the presence of a coherently and racially based anti-Semitism was modest in Norway, and historian Hans Fredrik Dahl claims that Norwegian political debate was 'entirely unaffected' by the populist anti-Semitic

¹⁷⁹ Tydén 1990, p. 83.

¹⁸⁰ Nilsson & Svanberg 1997, p. 77; Metcalf 1989, p. 43; and Tydén 1990, p. 83.

¹⁸¹ It should be mentioned that the compliance of the Swedish prohibition has been less strict than in Norway. For instances, Jews were allowed to slaughter poultry according to shechita (Berg 2005, p. 99), and in the 1930s, veterinary authorities and the Stockholm Jewish community reached a compromise involving anaesthetisation with nitrous oxide (see chapter 5.1). From 1959, both authorities and Jewish communities accepted shechita of electrically stunned cattle, until also this method was banned by authorities in 1979 (Berg 2005, p. 101).

ideology emerging in Germany, France, and the Habsburg Monarchy from the 1870s onwards.¹⁸² Norwegian anti-Semitism was expressed through xenophobic nationalism rather than through race ideology, according to Emberland. Anti-Semitism was ‘latent and situational’ in Norway, and anti-Semitic sentiments were expressed only in certain contexts, especially connected to ‘fear of competition, of alien culture and religion, of war and revolutions’. Emberland explains this ‘situational anti-Semitism’ as being due to the comparatively small Jewish population in Norway, who hardly could be accused for representing a threat or force in Norwegian society. Therefore, anti-Semitism in Norway was mainly directed towards *external* forces.¹⁸³ Dahl, on the other hand, emphasises Norwegian anti-Semitism as expressions of xenophobia in general, reaching back to the 1814 Constitution’s prohibition of Jews’ entry into the realm, and being particularly strong in a comparatively homogeneous, peripheral society.¹⁸⁴

Also historian Einhart Lorenz agrees on the comparatively modest role of anti-Semitism in Norwegian society. If German anti-Semitism prior to the 1930s has been characterised as being ‘of secondary importance’,¹⁸⁵ Lorenz claims that in Norway, anti-Semitism was a tertiary phenomenon. Still, Lorenz goes further than both Emberland and Dahl in characterising the potential of Norwegian anti-Semitism, and emphasises the presence of everyday anti-Semitism, ‘always present through stereotypes, comics, horror stories and prejudice in general’.¹⁸⁶ According to Lorenz, this ‘structural’ anti-Semitism could be activated through ‘conjunctural’ socio-economic factors, such as political turmoil, economic crises, unemployment or immigration. Here, Lorenz builds on Shulamit Volkov’s hypothesis that changes in anti-Semitism can be traced back specifically to the majority’s needs in difficult periods.¹⁸⁷ For the interwar period, Lorenz concludes that conjunctural factors during this period increased the dissemination and variety of anti-Semitic stereotypes and prejudices. More than previously, the flexibility of anti-Semitic prejudices became apparent in these years.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸² Dahl 2008, p. 443.

¹⁸³ Emberland 2005, p. 401f.

¹⁸⁴ Dahl 2008, p. 444 and p. 446.

¹⁸⁵ Volkov 2001, p. 66.

¹⁸⁶ Lorenz 2011a, p. 36.

¹⁸⁷ Lorenz 2011a, p. 38; Volkov 1990, p. 62.

¹⁸⁸ Lorenz 2011a, p. 45.

Although the scholars just quoted disagree on the extent and nature of Norwegian anti-Semitism, they agree on the lack of ideological and organised anti-Semitism in Norway. In line with these authors, also this dissertation rely on a understanding of anti-Semitism which is not exclusively connected with the rise of the modern, ideological anti-Semitism of the late 19th century, but a flexible anti-Semitism that has many manifestations, and that can be activated under certain circumstances. Still, ideological anti-Semitism similar to what was found in German anti-Semitic parties also existed within Norwegian institutions and organisations, and not only in marginal groups. The single organisation where ideological and political anti-Semitism had more impact than anywhere else in interwar Norway was the peasant movement. Many of the most ardent opponents of kosher slaughtering were also found in the peasant movement. Before discussing the role of anti-Semitic ideology within the peasant movement, it would be relevant to address some of the other contexts where anti-Semitism appeared in Norway up until the prohibition on kosher slaughtering entered force in 1930.

Prior to the First World War, negative images of Jews appeared seldom in the public sphere; however, verbal attacks were directed at Jewish merchants and travelling salesmen,¹⁸⁹ and there was considerable scepticism towards Jews in certain Christian circles.¹⁹⁰ However, from around 1910, anti-Semitic statements and writings became more frequent. Dahl characterises this as an ‘actual anti-Semitism’ in contrast to attacks during the period before, now accusing Jews of representing subversive forces, and not least for being a separate collective or race.¹⁹¹ Most prominent is Supreme Court lawyer Eivind Saxlund’s 1910 book *Jøder og Goyim* (‘Jews and Goyim’), which appeared in several editions well into the 1920s. The self-professed anti-Semite had written the book to ‘spread knowledge about Jews’ in Norway, and his book is a veritable catalogue of anti-Semitic images and stereotypes throughout most of Western history.¹⁹² Still, Saxlund appears as a classical representative of the modern anti-Semitism as it emerged in Germany from the late 1870s, strongly influenced by racial ideology and authors such as Theodor Fritsch and Houston Stuart Chamberlain.¹⁹³ Saxlund also expressed belief in conspiracy theories about Jewish world power, and identified ‘Alliance Israélite’

¹⁸⁹ Emberland 2005, p. 404.

¹⁹⁰ See Foss 1994, Andersen 2004, Kjørven 2004, and Kopperud 2011.

¹⁹¹ Dahl 2008, pp. 446–447.

¹⁹² Christensen 1998, p. 11ff.

¹⁹³ Saxlund 1910, p. 8. See also Christensen 1998, p. 16 and chapter 6.

[sic] and its 'subdivisions' the Anglo-Jewish Association in London and Israelitische Allianz in Vienna as some of the most important 'Jewish secret societies'.¹⁹⁴ Through their 'secret societies' and their control of the world press, the Jews were able to implement large societal changes, and were champions of liberal, modern, and materialistic values, according to Saxlund.¹⁹⁵ Saxlund's book created much controversy in the press, but as Olaf Christensen has shown in his master's thesis, many were positive to Saxlund's book, and there were relatively few condemnations. Christensen explains this acceptance as being due to the widespread lack of knowledge about Jews in Norway, and claims that Saxlund's book fulfilled a need.¹⁹⁶ Lorenz remarks that the book was perceived as 'objective information' in Norwegian public debate, and characterises Saxlund's book as a 'key to understand which connotations Jews evoked in large parts of Norwegian society'.¹⁹⁷

Although Saxlund explained the need for the book as being due to the increasing Jewish presence in Norway, he did not address Norwegian Jewry specifically. However, another anti-Semitic publisher did, the typographer Mikal Sylten. Due to defamatory accusations against Jewish individuals in his journal *Nationalt Tidsskrift* ('the National Journal'), Sylten was convicted in a libel case in 1927. Still, Sylten continued to attack Norwegian Jews in his journal and by publishing the pamphlet 'Who's Who in the Jewish World' in several editions from 1925 to 1941.¹⁹⁸ Despite the controversy Sylten made in the mainstream press, his position was still marginal, and Emberland characterises his anti-Semitic project as a 'one-man business'.¹⁹⁹ In the larger public sphere, anti-Semitic images and stereotypes occurred more frequently in popular literature and satirical magazines during the interwar period. The tendency of depicting stereotypical Jewish characters in fiction emerged already from around the turn of the century,²⁰⁰ but was accentuated during the First World War, not least in connection with the Russian Revolution. There is also reason to believe that increased dissemination of such stereotypes around World War I and the Russian Revolution contributed to create hysteria about subversive Jewish powers. In 1917, for instance, the Ministry of Justice started surveillance of Jewish individuals, fearing a Bolshevik revolution

¹⁹⁴ Christensen 1998, p. 21.

¹⁹⁵ Christensen 1998, p. 22.

¹⁹⁶ Christensen 1998, p. 72.

¹⁹⁷ Lorenz 2011a, p. 37.

¹⁹⁸ Brattelid 2004, p. 82ff. and p. 95ff.

¹⁹⁹ Emberland 2005, p. 405.

²⁰⁰ Henden 2011.

in Norway.²⁰¹ The criminologist Per Ole Johansen has demonstrated how Jews after the outbreak of World War I increasingly were discriminated against by Norwegian judicial authorities and immigration authorities, and how different anti-Semitic stereotypes were present in both the press and the bureaucracy.²⁰²

The conspiracy theories gained renewed interest in the 1920s, most prominently with the publication of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in several editions in the early 1920s. Recent scholarship has suggested that a lay preacher associated with the Jewish Mission [Jødemisjonen/Israelmisjonen], Albert Hiorth, had been instrumental in the publication of the Norwegian translation.²⁰³ The book received relatively little attention after its initial publication,²⁰⁴ and it was only some years after the book had been revealed as a forgery that it became known to a larger public in Norway. This was largely thanks to the author Marta Steinsvik (1877–1950), who travelled the country giving lectures on Jewish world conspiracies and the *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Her agitation against Jews and Jewish conspiracies was further disseminated in local and national press,²⁰⁵ especially in the peasant-movement press.²⁰⁶ Despite accusing Jews of working for world dominance through revolutions and capitalism, Steinsvik claimed not to be targeting Norwegian Jews, ‘who have nothing to do with such plans’, but she still wanted to reintroduce the 1814 Constitution’s prohibition of Jews’ entry into the realm.²⁰⁷ Hans Fredrik Dahl has characterised this proposal as an expression of Steinsvik’s and other like-minded contemporaries’ Norwegian cultural chauvinism [norskdom].²⁰⁸

Emberland remarks that Steinsvik’s anti-Semitic agitation was not only inspired by the *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, but also played on motives from classical Christian anti-Judaism. The Jews’ motivation behind the conspiracies was their ‘ancient Messianic dreams’, according to Steinsvik,²⁰⁹ and Emberland points out these motives’ resemblance to ancient claims of Jews being allies of Satan in the struggle against Christianity.²¹⁰ Such notions were

²⁰¹ Emberland 2005, p. 407.

²⁰² Johansen 1984 and Johansen 2005.

²⁰³ Aasvanger 2010.

²⁰⁴ Aasvanger 2010, p. 42.

²⁰⁵ See esp. the interview with Steinsvik in *Aftenposten*, 06.05.1925.

²⁰⁶ Simonsen 2009, p. 48ff. See also Johansen 1984, p. 47.

²⁰⁷ *Aftenposten*, 06.05.1925.

²⁰⁸ Dahl 2008, p. 446.

²⁰⁹ Aasvanger 2010, p. 45.

²¹⁰ Emberland 2005, p. 409.

also disseminated in Christian circles, and especially individuals associated with the Jewish Mission coupled traditional anti-Judaism with conspiracy theories of Jewish subversive forces spreading Marxist and atheist ideas.²¹¹ Christian prejudices against Jews were also conveyed among some of the anti-Semitic actors mentioned above – Saxlund was especially concerned with how Jews remained separated from Christians, and claimed they followed their own set of rules and morals. An important source for this claim was found in the Talmud, which according to Saxlund was both a ‘religious and secular law code’ for Jews.²¹² Despite having lost a libel case against the journalist Paul Gjesdahl in 1923, after Gjesdahl had described *Jøder og Gojim* as ‘anti-Semitic smutty literature in handsome luxury binding’, Saxlund had not refrained from publishing a fourth edition of the book in 1924. He also engaged in the kosher slaughter controversies in 1914 and later in 1926 with letters in the peasant-movement daily *Nationen* and in conservative *Aftenposten*, thus being the most active of self-professed anti-Semites participating in the controversy. However, among groups and institutions with a clearly anti-Semitic agenda involved in the kosher slaughter affair, the peasant movement stands out through its national and local press organs. The role of anti-Semitic rhetoric and ideas in the peasant movement is therefore of special interest for the purposes of this dissertation.

Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia in the Peasant Movement

The term ‘peasant movement’ in dissertation refers to the political movement originating in the Norwegian Peasants’ Union [Norsk Landmandsforbund], founded in 1896. The Union was originally not intended as a political party, merely an interest organisation, but became increasingly politicised over the two decades leading up to the foundation of the Peasant Party in 1920.²¹³ The Peasant Party had considerable success in the 1921 elections, gaining 17 seats in the Storting. However, the Peasants’ Union had already three MPs elected in the 1918 elections, and when the party was formally established, there already existed an extensive peasant-movement press. The Peasants’ Union had originally been founded by farmers from the Follo region, southeast of Oslo, and the movement recruited members particularly among conservative, large-scale farmers in the East Country. Even though the movement’s

²¹¹ Emberland 2005, pp. 409–410. See also Kjørven 2004.

²¹² Saxlund 1910, p. 28.

²¹³ Nielsen 1997, p. 64.

geographical centre of gravity remained in the East Country, the peasant movement increasingly appealed to smallholders in coastal regions from around 1912.²¹⁴

While the peasant movement originally had the peasants' trade interests at the top of its agenda, the movement developed a distinctive ideology emphasising economic protectionism, isolationism, anti-internationalism, and national particularity. This ideology has been dubbed 'agrarian nationalism', and with its reactionary and exclusionary outlook, it differed remarkably from the Liberal Party's national ideology.²¹⁵ Like most of Norwegian historiography, few historical works on the peasant movement, including those on the Peasant Party/Centre Party, have been concerned with the role of anti-Semitism in the movement's ideological outlook. Anti-Semitic statements by key Peasant Party politicians, to the extent that such statements have been addressed at all, have been attributed individual politicians and claimed not to be representative of the movement or the party as such.²¹⁶ These currents have repeatedly been neglected in the general history of organisation structures, party press, elections campaigns and programs, and concrete policymaking.²¹⁷ Even historian May-Brith Ohman Nielsen's comprehensive doctoral dissertation on the Peasant Party's ideology and rhetoric in the interwar period, and her book on the history of the Peasant Party/Centre Party, refrain from addressing clearly anti-Semitic rhetoric found in most peasant-movement newspapers. One of Nielsen's main sources, in addition to the main organ *Nationen*, is *Østlendingen*, the official Peasant Party organ in eastern Hedmark County. Both newspapers dedicated much attention to the kosher slaughter controversy in the late 1920s; however, these writings are entirely overlooked in Nielsen's accounts. Nielsen's works on the peasant movement's history are illustrative of how the kosher slaughter controversy, intentionally or not, has escaped the attention of Norwegian historians, despite being part of election campaigns and being used in agitation against other parties (more on this below). The issue has simply not been regarded as a part of peasant-movement politics and ideology.

Despite general historiography's failure to address the role of anti-Semitism, special studies by the historian Olav Rovde, and more recently by the historian Kjetil Simonsen, have

²¹⁴ Rovde 1995, p. 149ff.

²¹⁵ Rovde 1995, p. 175ff.; Fure 1996, p. 29f.; Sørensen 1998, p. 41; Nielsen 1997, p. 15ff.; Simonsen 2009, pp. 20–29.

²¹⁶ See esp. Gabrielsen 1970 and Hauge 1980.

²¹⁷ Anti-Semitism in the Swedish peasant movement has addressed by scholars since the 1980s, see Tydén 1986, pp. 43–50 and Berggren 1999.

captured many of these aspects of the peasant movement and its press.²¹⁸ Rovde points out that the peasant movement's nationalist ideology in the 1920s increasingly was directed towards fighting the labour movement, and that 'extreme' peasant nationalism was mainly confined to the East Country and Trøndelag – the same regions where Vidkun Quisling's National Unity Party later had its strongholds. The more 'egalitarian' West Country rural districts were to a lesser extent receptive to these extreme right-wing currents.²¹⁹ Rovde has also examined the role of racial biology in the Peasant Party's immigration policy in the interwar years. Although notions of racial biology gained many followers in Norwegian public sphere from around 1910 and throughout the interwar years, Rovde claims that the Peasant Party was particularly receptive to these ideas. The Peasant Party was the first party to implement racist anti-immigration policies in its party programme, and many of the party's politicians publicly warned against a liberal immigration policy's consequences for Norwegian racial purity.²²⁰

Race ideology was also manifested in clearly anti-Semitic rhetoric; however, as historian Kjetil Simonsen has demonstrated, the peasant movement's anti-Semitism was mainly rooted in conspiracy beliefs, and took up many motives from the modern anti-Semitism. Through examining the movement's main organ, the daily *Nationen*, and the local peasant paper *Namdalen*, published in Nord-Trøndelag County, for the period 1920–1925, Simonsen has identified the most common anti-Semitic images and accusations, as well as their function in the movement's agitation.²²¹ According to him, the movement's anti-Semitic agitation was characterised by two main themes, however, both relying on notions of Jewish conspiracies. On one hand, agitation against 'Jew Bolsheviks' and accusations of Jews' having caused the Russian Revolution were used to smear political opponents on the left, especially those in the Labour Party.²²² On the other hand, notions of Jewish control over 'international finance' contributed to enforce the movement's opposition to market forces and capitalism. In this sense, images of foreign capitalist Jews' influence over the Norwegian economy and Norwegian politics were used in polemics against the Liberal and Conservative parties.²²³

²¹⁸ Rovde 1997, Simonsen 2009, Simonsen 2010, Simonsen 2011, Simonsen 2012. See also Foskum 2005.

²¹⁹ Rovde 1995, pp. 313–314.

²²⁰ Rovde 1997, pp. 327–328.

²²¹ See Simonsen 2011 for a summary of the most relevant findings in these newspapers.

²²² Simonsen 2011, p. 130ff.

²²³ Simonsen 2011, p. 143.

Although these images seemingly were contradictory, a common denominator for both these motives was the Jews' international character. The Jews' 'unnational' character made them particularly well suited as a counter image of the peasant movement's idealised image of Norwegian farmers as the core of Norwegian nationhood.²²⁴ Even more interesting is Simonsen's conclusion that the peasant movement's anti-Semitic agitation was an integral part of its isolationist and anti-internationalist agrarian-nationalist ideology.²²⁵ In the 1927 election campaign, the Peasant Party accused the Liberal Party and Conservative Party of having been forced by Jews abroad to postpone the bill that would prohibit kosher slaughtering. Simonsen claims that the peasant-movement press's use of the kosher slaughter affair had wider implications than only religious slaughter. The affair was used to strengthen the party's self-representation of being a truly national project.²²⁶

However, there are still many questions remaining regarding the role of anti-Semitism within the peasant movement. For instance, why did these notions apparently find most support in the East Country and Trøndelag? Furthermore, were these notions merely imports from the anti-Semitic movement abroad, or results of more profound anti-Jewish notions persisting in the rural population from the 19th century? Peasant support for the 1814 Constitution's paragraph 2 and peasant MPs' reluctance to lift the paragraph during the 1840s suggest that the peasant movement's use of anti-Semitic stereotypes in the interwar years might be part of a larger pattern, reaching much further back in history.²²⁷ Olav Rovde also points out that opposition to immigration and belief in racial theories also existed within the other parties in the interwar years, particularly in the Labour Party.²²⁸ However, to what extent these notions also implied anti-Semitism is yet to be examined. Still, there are indications of unambiguously anti-Semitic rhetoric within parts of the labour movement in the interwar years.²²⁹ Hopefully, the Labour Party's stance in the kosher slaughtering debates will contribute to shed some new light on these questions in the dissertation's chapters addressing parliamentary debates.

In this dissertation's framework, the peasant movement represents much of the same 'chauvinistic' rationale for slaughterhouse regulation and animal laws, a rationale which in

²²⁴ Simonsen 2011, p. 155.

²²⁵ Simonsen 2009, p. 2.

²²⁶ Simonsen 2012, p. 23.

²²⁷ On peasant resistance to the lifting of the Constitution's § 2, see Skullerud 1971.

²²⁸ Rovde 1997, p. 332. See also Kolsrud 1990, p. 12f.

²²⁹ Fløgstad 1999, pp. 180–182 and Dahl 2008, p. 452.

the German context was promoted by anti-Semitic parties in the Reichstag. However, in Norway, the urge for slaughter reform and animal laws mainly originated in the animal protection movement and in veterinary medicine. Contrary to Germany, however, these had highly different opinions on kosher slaughtering, and much of this disagreement stemmed from different notions of the use and role of science. Therefore, the final background chapter will address this conflict, as well as the institutional background of the actors involved.

2.3: Animal Protection and Science

In order to understand the Norwegian animal protection movement's attitudes towards shechita and the relatively large role the anti-shechita agitation played in the movement, it is necessary to look deeper into the movement itself. Although the movement has been labelled as anti-Semitic for its stance on kosher slaughtering ever since the issue was first brought up around the turn of the century, there is in fact little evidence suggesting that ideological anti-Semitism played a similar role in the Norwegian movement as it did in the Swiss, and to a certain extent in the German. This does not imply that the movement never conveyed anti-Semitic rhetoric and used negative images of Jews throughout the agitation against shechita. However, there is little to suggest that anti-Semitism triggered the opposition to shechita when it first appeared around the turn of the century. The increasingly negative assessment of shechita over the next two decades was enhanced by a growing scepticism towards scientific authority and conflicts with government veterinary authorities over other issues. Thus, the increased polarisation in the kosher slaughter question between animal protectionists and veterinary experts must therefore be viewed in a larger context of opposing views on science and the role of expertise. Before moving on to these themes, it would be necessary to give a brief account of the animal protection movement's history in Norway, its social composition, and its organisation.

There are few historical works on the animal protection movement or on animal protection causes in Norway,²³⁰ although some scholars recently have touched on the theme, especially with regard to animal experimentation.²³¹ In Sweden, however, historian of ideas Karin Dirke

²³⁰ Most of these are written on behalf of the organisations in connection with jubilees, etc. See Daa 1873, Schilbred 1934, Schilbred 1959, Gierløff 1945.

²³¹ Asdal 2006; Asdal 2008; Druglitrø 2013. See also Ellefsen 2013.

has studied the organisation and ideology of the animal protection movement.²³² Given the close collaboration between the Scandinavian animal protection movements, Dirke's findings are to a certain extent also relevant for Norway, but with some notable exceptions. The history of the Norwegian movement also reaches further back in time, and it has been necessary to study primary sources in order to develop a picture of the history of the Norwegian animal protection movement. Still, Dirke's analysis of the conflict between 'practitioners' and 'theoreticians' is useful also for interpreting the anti-shechita campaign's role within the Norwegian movement, while the social composition of the Swedish movement to a lesser extent is reflected in Norway.

The Norwegian animal protection movement's own myth of origin starts in London in 1858, where the Danish-born Kristiania merchant David Graah (1803–1887) was given a pamphlet of an animal protection association that made a great impression on him. After his return to Kristiania, Graah summoned friends and acquaintances to discuss the foundation of a Norwegian animal protection association, and the year after, in 1859, the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania was established with several prominent figures in its leadership. Historian and university professor Ludvig Kristensen Daa became its first leader, and the teacher and philologist Knud Knudsen and the politician and later Norwegian prime minister in Stockholm, Ole Richter, were among the founders.

The Kristiania association had been modelled after the British Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. As the British Royal Society did, it fought animal abuse in order to civilise humans, linking cruelty to animals with cruelty to humans.²³³ In Britain, the working classes became the targets for the predominantly upper- and middle-class animal protectionists' agitation.²³⁴ This also seems to apply to the Norwegian movement, given its similar social composition as mainly an urban, middle-class phenomenon, albeit the Norwegian movement to a greater extent was targeting the rural population. In the last decades of the 19th century, a number of local animal protection associations were founded around the country, but the Kristiania association remained the leading organisation, with regard to both membership and influence, until the creation of the Norwegian Federation of

²³² Dirke 2000.

²³³ Schilbred 1959, pp. 33–44. For more on the British Royal Society, see Ritvo 1987.

²³⁴ Ritvo 1987, p. 125ff.

Animal Protection Associations in 1920.²³⁵ The Kristiania association published the monthly magazine *Dyrenes Ven* from 1897, described above, as well as a number of educational pamphlets, mainly aimed at the rural population. In addition, a nationwide Women's Animal Protection Association [Kvinneforeningen til Dyrenes Beskyttelse] was founded in 1902, and this association will be described further below.

Social Structure

Although the Kristiania association had many prominent figures (politicians, authors, civil officers, and professors) among its members in the 1860s and 1870s, the association's social composition changed during the last decades of the 19th century. From being an exclusive circle around the founder and his friends, the association changed into a large membership association, appealing mainly to urban merchant petty bourgeoisie and the professional classes. A survey of the members' occupational structure, based on membership lists from 1898 and 1913,²³⁶ shows that the association almost exclusively recruited from the upper and middle strata of the urban bourgeoisie.²³⁷ None of its approximately 600 members are identified as workers, and only about 10% were lower functionaries or craftsmen. The largest occupational sub-group consisted of merchants and business owners, accounting for 20% of the association's total membership.²³⁸ If one includes the 5% of managers and directors, the commercial bourgeoisie counted for almost a quarter of the membership. The impression that the association's membership had its basis in the upper and middle classes is strengthened by the fact that estate owners and factory owners made up over 8% of the total membership in 1898.²³⁹

In contrast to the relatively high number of estate owners, only one per cent of the membership consisted of farmers in 1898. The low number of farmer members should not surprise, given that the association was based in Kristiania. However, the lack of farmers

²³⁵ The Kristiania association had in addition to members living in the capital also a number of members living in other parts of the country.

²³⁶ The lists are to be found in *Dyrenes Ven* 1898, pp. 43–47 and *Dyrenes Ven* April 1913 (appendix pp. 1–4).

²³⁷ The membership lists do not indicate occupation for all members. Where this has been the case, lists have been supplemented with occupational data from the 1900 and 1910 censuses. For about 10% of the total membership in both 1898 and 1913, occupations have not been possible to determine.

²³⁸ In this group are included titles such as 'grosserer', 'handelsmand', 'kjøbmand', 'agent', 'skibsreder', and 'trelasthandler'.

²³⁹ This number had shrunk to 5.5% in 1913. Although an unusually high number of capital and landowners, the association's annual report for 1902 complained that still 'very few of our [the city's] wealthiest men are members', even though the association in the previous year had launched a campaign to recruit the city's 200 wealthiest men ('Beretning' in *Dyrenes Ven* 1903, p. 83).

becomes less obvious when taking into account that almost a third of all members lived outside Kristiania, and that most other animal protection associations were based in cities and smaller towns.²⁴⁰ By the turn of the century, farmers and smallholders still made up the largest occupational group in Norway, and the Animal Protection Association seemingly did not appeal any more to farmers than it did to workers. Even though the number of farmer members had slightly increased in 1913 (2.5%), the insignificant number of farmer members sets the peasant movement's opposition to shechita in another light. In rural districts, estate owners, civilian and military officers, and local professional elites were the keenest animal protectionists.

In addition to the commercial bourgeoisie, a remarkably high number (15%) of the association's urban members were civilian officials or army officers. Liberal professions also account for about 15% of the membership, predominantly physicians and lawyers.²⁴¹ In 1913, these occupation groups had grown to almost 20% of the membership, of which about half were medical doctors. However, compared to Sweden,²⁴² few veterinaries, teachers, and clergymen were represented in the association, only about 5% of the membership. Still, some leading members were teachers, such as the editor of the journal *Dyrenes Ven*. The Association's leadership mostly reflected the majority of urban commercial bourgeoisie, officials, and liberal professionals, although members of the latter two groups generally held the most prominent offices. Still, there had been a remarkable decline of the leading members' social status since the foundation in 1859. The association's first chairman was university professor and Liberal MP Ludvig Kristensen Daa (1809–1877). Daa and his successors Nils Hertzberg (1827–1911) and Halvor Heyerdahl Rasch (1805–1883) were among Norway's leading mid-19th-century intellectuals. In 1898, only a handful of politicians, professors, and higher officials were left, and the association was led by an army officer.²⁴³ The group of more prominent members who supported the association's founding

²⁴⁰ Unfortunately, with the exception of the women's association, it has not been possible to find membership lists from other animal protection associations. The numbers of the women's association, however, confirm the findings from the Kristiania association.

²⁴¹ In this group, I have included lawyers, doctors, veterinaries, pharmacists, and engineers. A relatively high number of the 8% of army officers (about a quarter of these) were also physicians who served as military medics, but these have not been counted with the physicians in this survey.

²⁴² Dirke 2000.

²⁴³ Crown equerry, Lt. Col. Georg Sverdrup (1841–1912).

in 1859 disappeared as they died,²⁴⁴ and there is reason to believe that they were never replaced by new generations of higher civil officers, politicians, and intellectuals.

Rejection of Scientific Authority

In the Swedish animal protection movement, Karin Dirke has highlighted conflicts between ‘practical’ and ‘theoretical’ animal protectionists. The former group, mainly composed of veterinaries, tended to emphasise arguments of animals’ ‘utility’ for humans, both in a practical and moral sense. Animals could do manual work for humans, but also serve as ideals. Adherents of these arguments were most concerned with differences between humans and animals.²⁴⁵ The ‘theoretical’ animal protectionists, on the other hand, were more concerned about identification with animals, regarded the animals as individuals, and criticised the former group for not being able to feel real compassion for animals.²⁴⁶ The ‘practitioners’ in turn accused urban members, mainly women, of being concerned only with pets and of lacking any real experience with animals, thus promoting sentimental and romanticist notions of animals.

These opposing views were to a certain extent reflected in the Norwegian movement, and the founding of the Women’s Animal Protection Association in 1902 should be viewed as resulting from these tensions. The Women’s Association was to a greater extent concerned with vivisection than the former, male-dominated Kristiania organisation. The Women’s Association was also more critical of science and of the government veterinary authority, and some of its leading members were also concerned with mystic currents, such as theosophy and anthroposophy. There are some interesting common features between the women’s branch of the animal protection movement and the theosophy movement. According to historian of religion Siv Ellen Kraft, Norwegian theosophists frequently engaged in other ‘countercultural’ causes, such as women’s rights, animal protection, anti-vivisection, naturopathy, and vegetarianism.²⁴⁷ Several leading figures in the Norwegian Theosophical Society are also found in the member lists of the Women’s Association.²⁴⁸ However, also in the Kristiania

²⁴⁴ Compare for instance membership lists in *Beretning 1866* with those in *Beretning 1894*.

²⁴⁵ Dirke 2000, pp. 20–22.

²⁴⁶ Dirke 2000, p. 17. See more about this distinction in Franklin 1999, esp. chapter 2.

²⁴⁷ Kraft 2002, pp. 42–43. See also Kirkebø 1997, p. 105ff. and Mikaelsson 1998, p. 29f.

²⁴⁸ A number of those mentioned in Kirkebø 1997 are also found in the 1904 and 1912 membership lists, printed in *Dyrenes Beskytter*, January 1904 and January 1912, most prominently the Theosophical Society’s secretary general from 1913 to 1919, Eva Blytt, as well as Marie Neumann (Kirkebø 1997, p. 61), Maria Dehli (Kirkebø 1997, p. 74), Sigrid Heitmann (Kirkebø 1997, p. 81), Gyda Haabjørn (Kirkebø 1997, p. 105), Dagny Zadig

association, similar currents are found. One of the association's founders, veterinary Halfdan Nielsen-Sæther (1826–1908) had a strong interest in naturopathy. He was son of the almost legendary herbalist Anne Sæther (1793–1851), known as 'Mother Sæther', who had been convicted several times for quackery.²⁴⁹ Nielsen-Sæther's son, the dentist Victor Nielsen-Sæther (1873–1923), later became leader of the Association in 1912, and was one of the most ardent opponents of kosher slaughtering.

A common denominator for these currents was an outspoken scepticism towards science, which also found its way into the animal protection associations. The rejection of scientific authority seems to have been strongest in the female branch, which on several occasions demonstrated a strong anti-intellectual attitude in its journal *Dyrenes Beskytter*. In most cases, this attitude related to the struggle against vivisection, but the same arguments were also applied to kosher slaughtering, or on a more general level. This anti-scientific, anti-intellectual attitude was perhaps expressed most explicitly in an article by the German animal protectionist and former anti-Semitic Reichstag deputy, Paul Förster (see above). His article 'Authorities' in *Dyrenes Beskytter* in 1909 started with a harsh condemnation of society's 'high priests and scribes' – scientists and doctors, who according to Förster constantly were opposing progress and new thoughts.²⁵⁰ These 'authorities' were not real scientists, according to Förster. They demanded subordination to their claims solely on the basis of personal authority.

Förster had sympathy only for lone 'geniuses' that were dedicated only to their own vocations. These were the 'heretics' that always had 'received their reward in either a madhouse, a prison, on a cross or bonfire', and were to be praised only by following generations.²⁵¹ Besides several modern proponents of naturopathy, his examples were none other than Christ, Columbus, and Galileo.²⁵² Förster meant that in order to avoid future destinies such as these men had been the victims of, both 'vocational wisdom' and science would have to unite with the 'clear vision and common sense of the impartial layman'. The

(Kirkebø 1997, p. 105), Helen Egilsrud (Kirkebø 1997, p. 112), and Rebekka Graarud (Kirkebø 1997, p. 74). See also *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1925, p. 52.

²⁴⁹ Holck 2005, pp. 67–68.

²⁵⁰ Paul Førster [sic]: 'Autoriteter' in *Dyrenes Beskytter*, No. 1, 1909, p. 1.

²⁵¹ Paul Førster [sic]: 'Autoriteter' in *Dyrenes Beskytter*, No. 1, 1909, p. 3.

²⁵² '[Vincenz] Priessnitz, [Sebastian] Kneipp, Rickte, [Per Henrik] Ling, Thure Brandt, Hessing'. Interestingly, *Dyrenes Beskytter* also raised the issue of naturopathy on several occasions, and defended the self-proclaimed naturopath and theosophist Ole Olvik after he in 1909 was charged with quackery ('Olvik' in *Dyrenes Beskytter*, No. 1, 1909, p. 10. See also Natvig 1998).

highest authority was ‘humanity’, which was defined by Förster as ‘the science of good and bad, of justice and love, of temper and conscience’.²⁵³ Förster claimed that modern science was revolting against the authority of humanity, and that it attempted to make itself master over ‘humanity and the common sense’ – at least this was the case in the vivisection question. Förster’s rhetoric against scientific authority was representative not only of the animal protection movement’s struggle against animal experimentation, but as will be evident from the following chapters, also of kosher slaughtering.

The Veterinary Authorities and the Struggle for Public Health

In both cases, the movement’s main opponent was the head of the government veterinary authority, Ole Malm. Malm himself used living animals in his bacteriological research, and protested loudly when the Storting in 1902 discussed whether vivisection should be subjected to regulation in the new penal code’s section on animal cruelty.²⁵⁴ Historian of science Kristin Asdal regards the debate on vivisection as a struggle between lay opinions and expert authority, where the animal protection movement and a majority of the penal code preparatory commission represented the former, while Malm and the university’s faculty of medicine represented the latter. In the Storting, the utilitarian argumentation of Conservative MP Francis Hagerup seemingly resulted in the majority’s abandoning the proposal to regulate vivisection.²⁵⁵

Still, Malm continued to oppose the animal protection movement’s devaluation of science. In fact, the conflict between lay opinions and expert authorities is a recurring theme in Malm’s life and works. Ole Olsen Malm (1854–1917) was the first director of the Ministry of Agriculture’s veterinary office, and was the driving force in veterinary medicine in Norway from the late 1880s until his death in 1917. In 1887, Malm received a scholarship created by the Storting in order to educate a ‘younger doctor in the veterinary sciences’. For this purpose, Malm in 1887 travelled to Denmark, France, England, and Germany where he studied veterinary sciences before he was called back to Norway by the government in 1890, and subsequently was made responsible for establishing the first civilian veterinary authorities in Norway.²⁵⁶ Kristin Asdal has explained the emergence of the Norwegian veterinary authority

²⁵³ Paul Førster [sic]: ‘Autoriteter’ in *Dyrenes Beskytter*, No. 1, 1909, p. 3.

²⁵⁴ Asdal 2006b, p. 277. For more on the parliamentary debates on vivisection, see also Asdal 2008.

²⁵⁵ Asdal 2008, p. 909.

²⁵⁶ Horne 1925, pp. 63–70. See also Torp 1940, pp. 47–53 and Welle 2003, pp. 222–223. A detailed account of Malm’s life and personality can be found in Malm 1939.

as being due to economic motives.²⁵⁷ She claims that Malm's main intention was to improve agriculture through increased livestock farming, and therefore the fight against contagious diseases was crucial for Malm. For instance, Asdal regards Malm's initiatives for a ban on livestock imports from Sweden in the 1890s as merely a pretext for establishing a Norwegian export market for livestock, mainly to the British Isles.²⁵⁸

However, when looking at Malm's education and career, it is evident that public health and the struggle against contagious diseases were Malm's main concerns, not primarily the improvement of agriculture. In fact, the establishment of the veterinary authority should mainly be seen as a means to battle contagious diseases such as tuberculosis and diphtheria. Malm studied under the greatest authorities in the field, such as Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch, and worked for a scientifically founded veterinary service after he returned to Norway.²⁵⁹ Malm's prevailing opposition to pseudo-science and his insistence on expert authority were apparent not only from the vivisection issue, but also in connection with debates concerning racial biology in Norway from around 1915, described by the biologist and philosopher Nils Roll-Hansen as 'the victory of expertise over dilettantism'.²⁶⁰ Still, Malm was a highly complex personality – apart from the struggle against lay judgements and pseudo-science, Malm was also one of the most active opponents of women's suffrage during his term as MP in 1909. In a recent work by rhetoric scholars Johan Tønnesson and Berit von der Lippe, the authors demonstrate how Malm himself used pseudo-scientific explanations in his opposition to women's suffrage.²⁶¹

²⁵⁷ Asdal 2005, pp. 13–46.

²⁵⁸ Asdal 2006a, pp. 257–259.

²⁵⁹ Seip 1984, pp. 231–233; Elvbakken 1996, p. 204ff. and 211ff.; Elvbakken 2003, p. 134; Kolsrud 2012, pp. 200–214. See also Malm's own thoughts on the role of veterinary medicine for public health in Malm 1889 (quoted in Asdal 2005, p. 21); Malm 1890 and Malm 1894, p. 1105ff.

²⁶⁰ Roll-Hansen 1980, p. 258. For Malm's role, see Roll-Hansen 1980, p. 266f. and Monsen 1997, p. 39; p. 43; pp. 52–53. Most of Malm's participation in the debate is collected in his newspaper scrapbooks in the archives of the Veterinary Institute, Oslo.

²⁶¹ Tønnesson & von der Lippe 2013, p. 140f.

Part 3: First phase 1890–1925. From Animal Protection Cause to Agricultural Policy

3.1: The Animal Protection Movement and Shechita in Norway and Denmark 1890–1910

‘It is not the animals one wishes to protect, but to persecute the Jews’ – these harsh words were directed at the animal protection movement when the question of allowing shechita at the new public slaughterhouse came up in the Kristiania City Council in 1910.²⁶² The originator of these words was the Liberal politician and head of the government’s veterinary authority, Ole Malm, who already in the year 1900 had made similar allegations of anti-Semitism in the animal protection movement.²⁶³ The notion that the wish to prohibit shechita was motivated by hatred of Jews has also been pursued further in some of the works on Jewish history in Norway. Already in 1922, well before the debate on shechita escalated in the national press, the secretary of the Mosaic Congregation in Kristiania, Harry Koritzinsky, wrote in his historical account of Norway’s Jewish community that during the first decade of the new century, ‘a germ to a anti-Semitic movement began to arise’ in the guise of criticism of the Jewish slaughter method. Per Ole Johansen later maintained this claim in his book from 1984 on Norway and the Jews in the interwar period. A problematic feature with this book’s chapter on the kosher slaughter controversy is that it does not take into account changes and variations in the animal protection movement’s agitation during a period of over 30 years. Thus, one may get the impression that the views of the movement’s leading figure in the late 1920s, the notorious anti-Semite and police officer Johan Søhr, apply to the entire movement ever since the 1890s. With reference to Oskar Mendelsohn, Johansen notes that most of the animal protectionists ‘were probably ensouled with idealistic motives’,²⁶⁴ but neither he nor Mendelsohn shows much interest in what these motives were, let alone how they came to affect the demand for a prohibition of shechita. These authors are merely content to establish the fact that ‘the issue appeared in Norway in the 1890s’.²⁶⁵

²⁶² Malm 1911, p. 55.

²⁶³ Malm 1900.

²⁶⁴ Johansen 1984, p. 63.

²⁶⁵ Mendelsohn 1969, p. 570; Johansen 1984, p. 63.

This assertion will be the starting point for this chapter – why and how did the issue of kosher slaughtering arise among animal protectionists in the 1890s? Was the Norwegian animal protection movement by the turn of the century influenced by anti-Semitic currents, as Ole Malm claimed? The chapter will focus on the publications of the Norwegian animal protection movement from its foundation in 1859 until around 1910, and examine how the demand for a prohibition of shechita emerged in these publications. The year 1910 is chosen as an end point because this was the year the issue reached the general public and ceased to be an internal debate among veterinarians and animal protectionists. The annual reports, pamphlets and periodicals published by the animal protection movement will be approached through a close reading, with an emphasis on semantic structures and shifts.

However, this chapter will also have a comparative approach, as similar publications from the Danish animal protection movement also will be included in the analysis. This approach is chosen in order to highlight the differences between two sister organisations that ended up with opposing views and policies with regard to shechita. Whereas the Norwegian movement made the demand for a ban on kosher slaughter one of its core issues from around 1910, the Danish movement took the opposite stance, and argued for toleration rather than prohibition. Therefore, this chapter will compare debates on slaughter reform and shechita in Norway and Denmark, and examine the formation of two distinct modes of talking about the issue, which nevertheless had evolved from a common starting point.

The chapter will commence by examining the traditional slaughter practices common in Scandinavia in the 19th century, and then look at the animal protection movement's initiatives for slaughter reform from around 1860 in Norway and somewhat later in Denmark. The following section will take a closer look at the practice of shechita among Jews in Denmark and Norway, respectively, before returning to the slaughter-reform issue in the 1890s. Then, the chapter will proceed by focusing on how shechita was addressed in the publications of the Norwegian and Danish animal protectionists from the 1890s until around 1910. From this moment, a prohibition of shechita was not just a theoretical option in Norway, but had already materialised in a proposal for a local prohibition in Kristiania, later adopted by the city council in 1913. The Danish movement, on the other hand, had after years of ambiguous attitudes, at last adopted tolerance as its official position towards shechita. The most important finding in this section is that the relatively successful campaign for slaughter reform in

Norway led the animal protectionists to an increasing extent to contrast the concept of *humane* slaughtering with the Jewish slaughter method, while the Danish animal protectionists were more occupied with fighting the so-called Danish-American slaughter method. Thus, the concept of ‘humane slaughter’ was to have different meanings in the two countries, which in turn affected the respective stances on shechita. In Norway, the notion of humane slaughter was contrasted to the Jewish slaughter method because of the perceived character of the latter being an archaic religious ritual. In Denmark, however, the very same features were in fact emphasised as *positive* characteristics of the Jewish slaughter method in contrast to the traditional slaughter methods and the Danish-American method.

However, even in Denmark, the Jewish slaughter method might as well have been perceived as belonging to the same category as the Danish-American method, and presented as an essentially cruel slaughter method. When this did not occur in Denmark, and the Jewish method sometimes was even ascribed positive features, it becomes pertinent to search for explanations in the different social and legal conditions Jews had lived under in Denmark and Norway, respectively. Whereas most Jews in Norway by the turn of the century still were relatively recently immigrated, there had existed a Jewish minority in Denmark since the late 17th century. The Danish Jews had enjoyed a relatively high degree of autonomy in the Danish absolutist state, and received civil rights the same year, 1814, as the Norwegian constitutional fathers prohibited Jews from entering the newly established Norwegian nation state. Thus, it will be argued that differences in the Jews’ societal positions in Denmark and Norway, respectively, are crucial for understanding the diverging attitudes towards shechita in the two countries.

Regardless of explanations, the *consequence* of the Danish movement’s comparatively effortless and tolerant attitude towards shechita was that public opinion and politicians never turned against the Jews in the debate on shechita in Denmark. In Norway, it was first and foremost the animal protection movement that mobilised public opinion against shechita. Thus, the findings in this chapter challenge, or at least supplement, Michael F. Metcalf’s claim that it was economic considerations that prevented the Danish legislators from introducing a prohibition of shechita.²⁶⁶ Without rejecting Metcalf’s argument entirely, the

²⁶⁶ Metcalf 1989, p. 45.

lack of hostile public opinion initiated by animal protectionists will be emphasised when explaining the lack of a prohibition of shechita in Denmark.

19th-Century Slaughter Methods in Scandinavia

Already a few years after the foundation of the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania in 1859, the call for slaughter reform became one of the most important causes for the association. In its first years, the main strategy in the struggle for improved slaughter methods was to spread a pamphlet entitled 'On Slaughter', written by veterinary Halfdan Nielsen-Sæther. This strategy was applied to most of the association's causes in its initial years,²⁶⁷ and among the publications we find titles such as 'Man's Obligations towards Animals', 'Punishable Maltreatment of Animals' and more practical pamphlets such as 'On the Arrangement of Barns and Stables'.²⁶⁸ In other words, the struggle for slaughter reform was part of a broader campaign for modernisation and rationalisation of animal husbandry. In Sweden, the historian of ideas Karin Dirke has described how such aims were promoted by the animal protection movement, especially by its veterinary members.²⁶⁹ In addition to the modernisation of animal husbandry, came concern for public morals. To watch the act of slaughtering was perceived as harmful for humans, especially for women and children.²⁷⁰ The well-being of the animals was in the initial years a minor concern, which only later became the primary motivation of the slaughter reform. In this sense, the Norwegian animal protection movement followed the development that occurred within the German movement. The Israeli sociologist of law Shai Lavi observes a shift from human-centred concerns to animal-centred concerns in the German animal protection movement from the 1870s onwards;²⁷¹ however, in Norway this shift occurred a decade or two later.

Although the distribution of pamphlets may have been a somewhat passive strategy, the association had over 20,000 copies of the slaughter pamphlet printed in at least five editions from 1860 until 1875.²⁷² In his pamphlet, veterinary Nielsen-Sæther included a description of

²⁶⁷ The distribution of pamphlets was one of five means listed in the association's statutes together with 'repeated inquiries to the public through the press', work among school children, reporting animal abuse to the police, and 'measures directed towards public opinion in order to prevent animal abuse not regarded a criminal offense' (*Beretning 1866*, p. 16).

²⁶⁸ Nielsen-Sæther 1865. See list of publications in the association's Annual Report for 1882 (*Beretning 1882*, p. 26).

²⁶⁹ Dirke 2000, p. 193.

²⁷⁰ Dirke 2000, p. 203.

²⁷¹ Lavi 2007, p. 233.

²⁷² See the association's annual reports (*Beretning*) for 1869, 1874, and 1875.

the ‘barbaric killing methods that are still common in certain rural areas’. Nielsen-Sæther described how cattle, by the means of ropes, were cast down and tied to a sleigh. Once fastened,

the butcher [...] with the use of a knife rips up the neck-skin along the throat in order to reach the oesophagus, which thereafter is pulled out with force, dragged out of its position and tied in order to prevent the contents of the abdomen from blending with the blood, and thus contaminating it. Thereon the butcher begins to cut across veins and arteries at the middle of the throat to make the animal to bleed to death.²⁷³

Nielsen-Sæther also described other painful measures delaying the moment of death, before he proceeded to recommend slaughter methods which either involved previous stunning through a blow with the back of an axe on the animal’s forehead (for cattle), or a stab in the neck (for horses), or simply cutting the throat without any form for stunning or other measures (for sheep and calves). Nielsen-Sæther’s and the animal protection movement’s main intention in the 1860s was mainly to abolish life-prolonging measures either being results of superstition or false ideas of how to improve meat quality. However, previous stunning was not regarded a prerequisite for the slaughtering of other species than cattle.

The folklorist Nils Lid’s (1890–1928) dissertation from 1924 on Norwegian slaughter traditions reveals that when the animal protection movement’s campaign for improved slaughter methods commenced, there existed a variety of differences in slaughter methods around the country. However, in principle, Lid’s study supports the general picture given by Nielsen-Sæther that the animals were exposed to a number of painful measures *before* the mortal stab or incision, and rarely stunned in any way.²⁷⁴ This was done either out of superstition or in the belief that the bleeding would be more complete and thus provide more blood for cooking, or improve the quality of the meat. Such practices were also common outside Norway and Scandinavia – the English historian Keith Thomas notes that

²⁷³ Nielsen-Sæther 1865. The tying of the oesophagus was also common in Sweden at the turn of the century (Dirke 2000, p. 189).

²⁷⁴ Lid 1924, p. 73. Lid’s accounts were based on material from the folkloristic collections of the Nordic university libraries, as well as topographical and local historical literature. Most of the accounts were collected around the turn of the century or later, with the accounts themselves reaching back to the middle of the 19th century, or even earlier.

The killing indeed could be a protracted business [...] In order to make their meat white, calves, and sometimes lambs, were struck in the neck so that the blood would run out; then the wound was stopped and the animal allowed to linger on for another day.²⁷⁵

Thomas also notes that cattle normally were poleaxed before being slaughtered. However, when this kind of previous stunning was applied, it was usually because of practical concerns, rather than any compassion for the animals, according to the Swedish ethnologist Brita Egardt.²⁷⁶ As late as in 1926, a submitter to the agrarian newspaper *Nationen* claimed that in many places in Norway, calves were still killed by cutting the throat without any form for stunning,²⁷⁷ while a submitter to *Aftenposten* the same year claimed that sheep were slaughtered without stunning in Northern-Norway in a manner far more brutal than the Jewish method.²⁷⁸ Also later folkloristic and local historic literature, especially from the East Country,²⁷⁹ confirms the use of such slaughter methods – the teacher and folklore collector Knut Hermundstad (1888–1976) has described similar slaughter methods from the Valdres region as does Lid, with informants born as late as in the 1920s.²⁸⁰

Lid also documents how a painful death was not necessarily an unintended consequence of prolonged bleeding. Especially with pigs, it was commonly believed that the animal should suffer visibly and audibly – sometimes up to an hour.²⁸¹ Interestingly, Lid also mentions that in many areas, it was common to say a short formula with religious or magical meaning before or during the slaughter act. In most places the formula ‘it is not out of resentment, but for nourishment’ [det er ikke gjort for hat, men gjort for mat] was said, thus emphasising the butcher’s intention for making the animal suffer not being hatred. In some parts of Norway, especially in the South and East Country, as well as in Sweden, it was common to make the sign of the cross over the animal’s head, and to pronounce the words ‘In the name of Jesus’ [i Jesu Navn] as the butcher cut the animal’s throat.²⁸² Some places, the making of the sign of the cross over the animal’s forehead was done with a knife, and the slaughter knife was commonly attributed magical powers. The knife was perceived as an object carrying

²⁷⁵ Thomas 1984, p. 93.

²⁷⁶ Egardt 1962, p. 168.

²⁷⁷ ‘Dyreven’: ‘Respekt for the levende liv’ in *Nationen*, 08.03.1926.

²⁷⁸ ‘Norsk dyreven’: ‘Norske og jødisk ‘schächtning’’ in *Aftenposten*, 30.04.1926.

²⁷⁹ See for instance Helmen 1953, p. 433.

²⁸⁰ Hermundstad 1985.

²⁸¹ Lid 1924, p. 75. This practice is also known from Germany; see Brantz 2002, p. 175.

²⁸² Lid 1924, p. 79. Lid had found this practice common in the regions of Østfold (Trøgstad), Hedemarken, Østerdalen (Elverum), Telemark (Seljord), and Aust-Agder (Mandal), as well as in Värmland and Södermanland in Sweden.

misfortune, which could be transmitted to the animals if the proper precautions were not followed, such as sticking the knife in the earth, or tramping on it after it had been used for slaughtering.²⁸³ Lid compared this ritualisation of the slaughtering with the practice in Islam of pronouncing the *bismillah* or the *takbir* ('allahu akbar')²⁸⁴ in the context of halal slaughtering.²⁸⁵ He might as well have compared this practice with shechita, a comparison which actually had been drawn a few years earlier by Lid's fellow ethnologist, the Swede Ernst Klein (1899–1983) of the Nordic Museum in Stockholm. Klein, himself the son of a rabbi,²⁸⁶ claimed to have identified other similarities between the Jewish slaughter method and the traditional slaughter rites and practices in Northern Europe, suggesting some kind of connection, a suggestion which he in later works abandoned.²⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the apparent similarities between these traditional Scandinavian slaughter practices and shechita constitute an important backdrop for understanding how shechita later was to be perceived by animal protectionists in Norway.

With the introduction of the slaughter mask in Norway in 1874, the Kristiania association's strategy for slaughter reform changed. The mask reduced the risk of not hitting the animal's forehead correctly, and the slaughter mask became the preferred stunning device of the animal protection movement in the late 1870s and 1880s. With the newly invented slaughter mask, the means hitherto used (distribution of pamphlets) proved insufficient in training local butchers to slaughter correctly. When the slaughter mask was used incorrectly, the risk of making mistakes increased, thus also the risk of unintentionally harming the animals.²⁸⁸ Instead of writing new pamphlets, the association therefore hired trained butchers who travelled different rural regions to promote and teach the correct use of the mask.²⁸⁹ The association also distributed slaughter masks free of charge to farmers in order to encourage the use of the mask. The mask, invented and patented in 1872 by A. M. Bruneau, a butcher at the Grand Abattoir of La Villette in Paris, was usually made of leather, or sometimes of copper, and provided with a metal disc with a round hole. The mask was fixed on the animal's head by means of straps in such a way that it covered the eyes, and the hole was placed on the

²⁸³ Lid 1924, pp. 85–91. Lid explained the practice of sticking the knife in the earth as a 'symbolic act to attach the killing to the place in order to put an end to all life and witchcraft' (p. 90).

²⁸⁴ *Bismillah* (arab.): 'in the name of God'. *Allahu akbar* (arab.): 'God is greater'.

²⁸⁵ Lid 1924, p. 81.

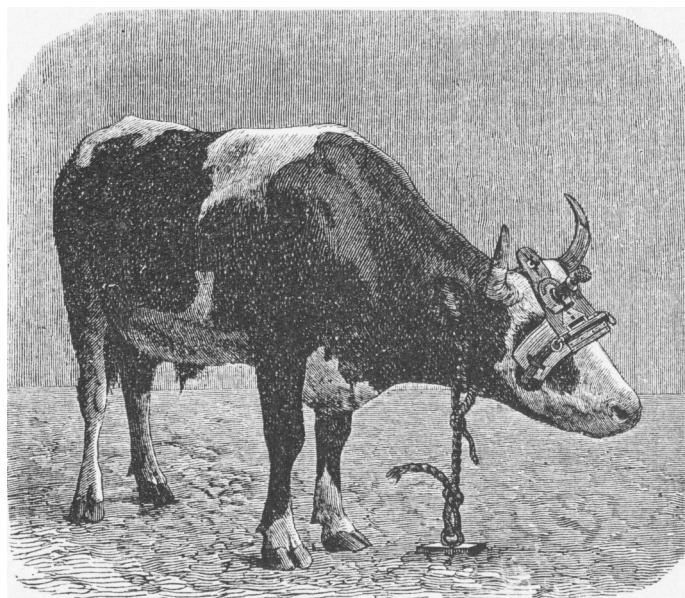
²⁸⁶ Lindblad 1924, p. 390.

²⁸⁷ Klein 1921, cf. Klein 1930.

²⁸⁸ Halfdan Nielsen-Sæther: 'Om Brugen af Slagtemasken' in *Beretning 1875*, p. 5.

²⁸⁹ See the association's annual report for 1874 and the following years.

middle of the animal's forehead. A bolt, with a button-shaped head, was put in the hole, and driven into the brain by a stroke with a heavy wooden mallet. Then the bolt was removed, and through the hole made in the skull, a willow cane was usually introduced into the brain for the purpose of destroying the medulla.²⁹⁰



Bruneau's mask as depicted in *Dyrevennen* No. 10, 1892

The Animal Protection Association of Kristiania's struggle for slaughter reform seems to have been relatively successful during the last decades of the 19th century. By 1883, the butchers hired by the association had travelled much of the eastern part of the country, and the association reported that the mask was usually put in use after being demonstrated for local farmers.²⁹¹ From the late 1880s, the shooting mask replaced Bruneau's mask as the preferred means of stunning, since the risk of harming the animals was even less with the new mask.²⁹² The shooting mask followed the same principle as Bruneau's mask, except that the bolt was replaced by a low-calibre bullet, which was fired by striking with a mallet or hammer a firing pin placed on the top of a rifled barrel.²⁹³ This was not only regarded as a more accurate method for hitting the animal's brain correctly, but also made use of a cane to destroy the medulla superfluous, and thus the procedure was assumed to be less painful for the animal. As the need for teaching the use of the different masks decreased in the 1890s, the distribution of

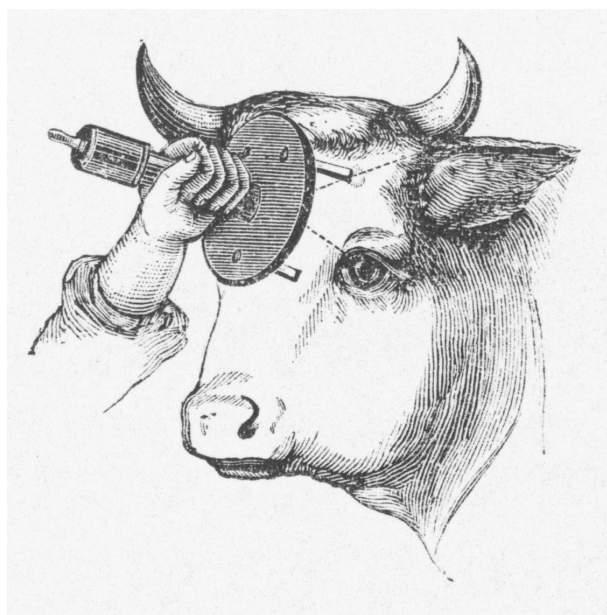
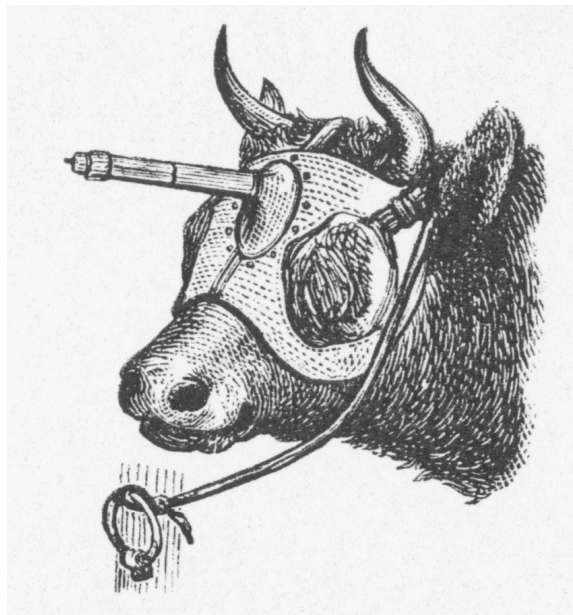
²⁹⁰ Dembo 1894, p. 27; MacLachlan 2008, p. 117.

²⁹¹ *Beretning 1884*, p. 3.

²⁹² *Beretning 1891*, p. 5.

²⁹³ MacLachlan 2008, p. 120.

shooting masks free of charge became the association's main instrument in the struggle for slaughter reform. By the turn of the century, the association had distributed perhaps more than a thousand slaughter masks and shooting masks.²⁹⁴



Two versions of the shooting mask (*Dyrevennen* No. 12, 1890 and No. 1, 1891)

We have not only the words of the Kristiania association's own annual reports about the success – the Danish animal protectionist monthly journal *Dyrevennen* reported with envy the progress of slaughter reform in Norway, and regretted in 1887 that Denmark was lagging behind Norway.²⁹⁵ Accounts in *Dyrevennen* indicate that the slaughter methods used in Danish rural areas differed little from traditional Norwegian methods.²⁹⁶ The Danish movement pursued a strategy for slaughter reform similar to that of Norwegian animal protectionists;²⁹⁷ however, the movement experienced much more resistance from butchers than was the case in Norway – especially at highly industrialised export slaughterhouses. In Danish cities and provincial towns, the slaughter sector was far more industrialised and

²⁹⁴ During the last decades of the 19th century, the association usually distributed between 50 and 100 masks of both kinds each year; see the annual reports. Having in mind that a mask usually was used by several farms in common, the mask must have been widely distributed already in the 1890s, at least in the East Country. This assumption is supported by some of the accounts given in Lid's survey, which state that the stunning method had from the 1880s replaced the older methods not involving stunning (Lid 1924, p. 75).

²⁹⁵ *Dyrevennen* 1887, No. 1, p. 6.

²⁹⁶ See for instance *Dyrevennen* 1880, No. 12, p. 95; *Dyrevennen* 1887, No. 7, p. 53; *Dyrevennen* 1887, No. 11, p. 87.

²⁹⁷ In fact, when it was established in 1875, the Animal Protection Association of Denmark was modelled after the Kristiania association. The statutes of the Danish association were almost identical to the statutes of the Kristiania association, and the Danish association pursued many of the same causes with the same means.

professionalised than in predominantly rural Norway. Despite the animal protection movement's prolonged campaigns, the Copenhagen public slaughterhouse began using stunning equipment only in 1917.²⁹⁸ Michael Metcalf identifies the use of the so-called Danish-American method of slaughter at the Danish export slaughterhouses as the main reason for the Danish parliament's resistance to making prior stunning mandatory – a notion supported by contemporary accounts in *Dyrevennen*.²⁹⁹

Shechita in Denmark and Norway

In addition to the industrialised slaughter methods and the more traditional ones (either with or without stunning), the Jewish slaughter method was practiced in both Denmark and Norway before the turn of the century. In Denmark, Jews had probably practiced shechita since first settling in Copenhagen in the late 17th century. Jews had been allowed to settle on the Danish mainland since the second half of the 17th century, and the first Jewish religious congregation was established in Copenhagen in 1684. In 1814, Danish Jews gained full civil rights with the Freedom Letter of King Frederick VI. Apart from giving them equal economic and professional rights, the new provisions also regulated their religious practices in several ways, for instance, by giving the king the right to establish synagogues and appoint rabbis, as well as submitting Jewish citizens to civic legislation. In several legislative fields, such as marriage and inheritance law, Danish Jews had previously been subjected to rabbinic law.³⁰⁰

One aspect of religious life that was *not* affected by the new regulations was the practice of shechita. In Copenhagen, authorities had already been regulating shechita since the early 18th century, when a Jewish family was given the privilege 'to maintain and use a slaughterhouse for the entire Jewish nation'. In 1717, the privileged Jewish butcher applied to city authorities for permission to open a shop nearby the other (Christian) butchers, but was refused, told that 'it cannot be allowed for a Jew publicly to sell to the Christians cattle slaughtered according to the Jewish method'.³⁰¹ In 1808, a provision issued by the Copenhagen Magistrate, stated that

²⁹⁸ Degen & Thamdrup 1925, p. 42.

²⁹⁹ Metcalf 1989; *Dyrevennen* 1890, No. 5, p. 35.

³⁰⁰ Blüdnikow & Jørgensen 1984, p. 82.

³⁰¹ *Kjøbenhavns Diplomatarium* 1887, p. 434.

the butchers in Copenhagen and its suburbs must not allow any other than the so-called kosher butchers [Schechtere eller Skjærere] appointed by the chief rabbis and the representatives of the Jewish Congregation [...] to slaughter the so-called kosher meat.³⁰²

Despite emphasising separating Jewish butchers from Christian butchers, these regulations should not necessarily be regarded as discriminatory. Danish historian Per Katz has shown how the Jewish community willingly accepted the authorities' decisions, and even presented disputes over ritual questions to the civil courts, which elsewhere would have been ruled over by a rabbinical court. Katz explains this acceptance by citing the circumstances under which the first Jews had settled in Denmark, namely on the invitation of the authorities at a moment in the absolutist state's history when the state's regulating measures affected all aspects of society. Thus, the first generations of Danish Jews did not perceive as unnatural the state's regulation of internal Jewish affairs; it was often the preferred solution to internal disputes.³⁰³ Concerning slaughter practices, these regulations probably contributed to the institutionalisation of the Jewish butcher profession. At least in 1834, when almost a third of all Danish Jews lived in the provinces, there were as many as 31 Jewish butchers spread among 17 provincial towns, in addition to a number in Copenhagen.³⁰⁴ Despite the extensive secularisation experienced by Danish Jewry during the 19th century, there were still at least half a dozen Jewish butchers in Copenhagen and several in provincial towns when the slaughter reform campaign commenced in the 1880s.³⁰⁵

In Norway, slaughtering according to Jewish law probably did not take place before the first Jewish families settled permanently in the 1860s. Until the 1900 census, however, no Jewish butchers (shochetim) are found in the censuses of Kristiania (neither in 1865, 1875, nor 1885), but according to Mendelsohn, the Mosaic Congregation [Det Mosaiske Trossamfund, DMT] employed its own shochet when the congregation was founded in 1892. Also the breakaway Israelite Congregation [Den Israelittiske Menighed, DIM], established a year later, in 1893,

³⁰² *Chronologisk Register* 1808, p. 846.

³⁰³ Katz 1988, p. 94.

³⁰⁴ Margolinsky 1964, p. 201.

³⁰⁵ In the 1880s, there were at least 7 Jewish butchers in Copenhagen: Baruch Baruch, Moses Berendt, Alexander Cohen, Elieser Cohen, Salomon Cohen, and Adolph Jacob Texiere (see 1880 and 1885 censuses for Copenhagen, available through Danish Demographic Database <http://ddd.dda.dk/>). An overview of the towns where there was at least one shochet can be found in Christensen & Syskind 1984, p. 130. These authors conclude that most of the Danish Jews had relatively easy access to fresh meat at the middle of the 19th century, even in the provinces.

employed its own shochet, who also served as the congregation's teacher of religion.³⁰⁶ Before the establishment of the two religious congregations, the few Jewish families who had lived in Kristiania since the 1860s either slaughtered the animal's themselves, or may not have observed the dietary rules strictly.³⁰⁷ Although Mendelsohn thoroughly describes these families and their professions, he does not mention any shochetim. However, he suggests that in these families were men capable of practicing shechita.³⁰⁸

In any case, shechita must have been a rarer sight in Kristiania than in Copenhagen – at least until the 1890s. With the influx of new contingents of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe around the turn of the century, the need for kosher meat increased, and the presence of two Jewish butchershops in Kristiania must have made the practice of Jewish slaughtering visible to the public for the first time. Although there exist few non-Jewish accounts of shechita in Norway from this period, Jewish butchers must have been perceived as an outlandish sight in Kristiania. In Denmark, where there had been Jewish butchers in most major provincial towns and Copenhagen, Jewish butchers could hardly have been perceived as an unfamiliar phenomenon in the same way as in Norway when the slaughter reform issue appeared in the 1880s. The photograph below, taken in Copenhagen in the mid-1880s, may serve to illustrate this; albeit different in attire and equipment, the two Jewish butchers (on the far left and standing third from the right) are still regarded a part of the butcher's guild:

³⁰⁶ Mendelsohn 1969, pp. 405–406 and 437–439. Based on Mendelsohn's account and the 1900 census, at least 9 shochetim and/or katzovim (meatsellers) may be identified in Kristiania since 1892: NN (DMT 1892), Nochem Salomon Meirowitz (DIM 1893), B. Levin (DMT 1897), A. Niederland (DMT 1898), Marcus Levin (DMT 1899), M. Kowalski (DMT 1900), Moses Lehmann (DIM 1900), and finally Samuel Pintzow. The latter took over Kowalski's business in 1903, and remained DMT's official meat supplier until a new split occurred in 1918. After the prohibition of shechita came in force in 1930, the Pintzow family maintained their butcher shop by selling imported meat from Sweden up until at least 1937 (see *Aftenposten* 24.09.1937).

³⁰⁷ Most of these families were of German or Danish origin and some members of these families also married gentils. Both these facts suggest that they were more secularised than were the families emigrating from Eastern Europe from the 1880s.

³⁰⁸ Mendelsohn 1969, p. 415.



The bearded man on the far left, holding the *hallaf* (slaughter knife) is identified as the shochet Elieser Cohen (1831–1898) and the third from the right in the back row as his son Alexander Cohen (1864–1894). Undated photograph (probably mid-1880s), Copenhagen Museum, Mariboe collection.

The 1891 Petition

Despite the relatively successful campaign for slaughter reform in the 1870s and 1880s, previous stunning was still not implemented in many parts of Norway by the end of the 1880s. A County Agronomist [Amtsagronom] of Stavanger County (present Rogaland County in the South-West Country) complained in 1887 that even when previous stunning was applied (usually with only a mallet or the back of an axe), the throat was cut slowly and elaborately in order to release and tie up the oesophagus and trachea. Thus, the animal would often regain unconsciousness during the slaughtering, even before the blood veins were cut.³⁰⁹ Similarly, veterinary Halfdan Nielsen-Sæther lamented in a letter printed in the newspaper *Morgenbladet* in October 1888 that slaughter animals still were being subjected to ‘barbaric treatment’ in ‘certain parts of the country and remote districts’. Nielsen-Sæther continued, describing slaughter methods that did not differ much from those he had described twenty years earlier. In a follow-up article a few weeks later, he quoted several reports from rural

³⁰⁹ Anda 1887, p. 19.

areas he had received in the meantime, describing local slaughter practices. These reports confirmed the impression given in earlier accounts, that the slaughter animals often were purposely made to suffer.³¹⁰

However, perhaps most interesting about Nielsen-Sæther's letter is the response it provoked from the author Camilla Collett (1813–1895) some weeks later in *Aftenposten*. Collett, like her brother the poet Henrik Wergeland (1808–1845), had since her youth been engaged in the well-being of animals. Her brother, who is perhaps better remembered for his opposition to the paragraph in the 1814 Constitution that forbade the entry of Jews into the realm, had already in an 1833 pamphlet proposed that 'all mistreatment of animals, all gruesome slaughtering must be prohibited'.³¹¹ Although never an ordinary member of the Animal Protection Association, Camilla Collett was an important supporter and patron of the association until her death in 1895, and was named an honorary member of the association in 1894.³¹² In her response to Nielsen-Sæther, Collett described the slaughter methods used in some parts of the country as 'remains of ancient barbarity', and added even more horrifying details to Nielsen-Sæther's account. Nevertheless, Collett, who herself as the daughter of a country clergyman was well acquainted with the slaughter customs in the countryside, did not blame butchers and farmers, but pointed out that little could possibly have been done so far:

The awareness about the inhumane in such treatment of animals was still entirely lacking. Such were the customs, passed down through the generations. It could not have been otherwise. [...] Attempts to reform the slaughter profession would only have been regarded as pathological fantasies, completely futile. Such reforms must await their time.

However, now time had come for a genuine reform of the slaughter profession, according to Collett: 'We may praise us happy, that we have reached one of these eras of reform, where also the animal cause is included'. Collett encouraged all people that came in touch with the youth to 'turn their feelings for the animal in a more gentle direction'.³¹³ Collett's public

³¹⁰ Halfdan Nielsen-Sæther: 'Oprørende Slagtning' in *Morgenbladet*, 31.10.1888. The article was reprinted together with the follow-up in the association's annual report from 1888 (*Beretning 1889*, p. 4).

³¹¹ Wergeland 1833.

³¹² Collett also donated a larger amount of money to the association, destined for a publication on humane slaughter methods. The donation resulted in a pamphlet written by the veterinary and lecturer at the Agricultural University at Ås, Oluf Thesen, published in 1891 and printed in 9,000 copies (Thesen 1891; *Beretning 1891*, p. 6; 1894; *Beretning 1894*, p. 10). Another 10,000 copies of a second edition were printed in 1893 (*Beretning 1893*, p. 4). A collection of Collett's writings on animal protection was published in 2008 by the current animal protection movement in Norway (Knutsen 2008).

³¹³ Camilla Collett: 'Vær ikke grusom mod Dyrene' in *Aftenposten*, 24.11.1888.

endorsement of the struggle for slaughter reform was by no means unique, but rather represents an increasing interest in this subject in the late 1880s and early 1890s – an interest that exceeded the animal protection associations.

The Danish animal protection journal *Dyrevennen*, distributed to all members of the Danish and Norwegian animal protection associations, also dedicated much attention to the subject in these years. In the 1891 edition's first issue, the editor, Counsellor of Justice J. Chr. Lembcke,³¹⁴ solemnly declared, 'The efforts of the editors in the coming future shall be particularly directed at combating **barbarian slaughter methods**'.³¹⁵ The same year, the Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish animal protection movements joined forces, and published a petition in all the major Scandinavian newspapers.³¹⁶ The petition, maybe inspired by a similar petition issued by the German *Verband der Thierschutzvereine* in 1886,³¹⁷ was directed primarily at 'the Messrs. Butchers in the Nordic countries', urging them to have 'all animals [...] stunned by the means of the slaughter mask, the shooting mask or other appropriate (stunning) equipment'. This petition, a measure unequalled by the animal protection movements in any of the countries, was signed by a number of politicians, scientists, higher clergy, state officials, army officers, landed gentry, nobility and authors – including Camilla Collett.³¹⁸ The petition also attracted attention from animal protection associations abroad – for instance, the German animal protectionist journal *Cimbria* had the petition translated into German. The German journal characterised the Nordic joint initiative as a 'remarkable petition', and added that the petitioners had as their intention 'the abolishment of the cruel slaughter method which is contrary to civilisation and

³¹⁴ Titular Counsellor of Justice [Justitsraad], Jacob Christopher Lembcke (1833–1907) and his wife Julie (née Wilster, 1826–1899) were the driving forces in the Danish animal protection movement from the foundation of the Copenhagen association in 1875. The association was founded on a meeting taking place in the home of the wealthy Lembcke's, and Lembcke himself was chairman of the association from 1888 until his death in 1907. The association's unofficial journal *Dyrevennen* was owned, published, and edited by Lembcke from 1880 until it became the official periodical of the association after Lembcke donated the journal to the association in 1902. Lembcke continued as editor until his death, and was also involved in a range of other philanthropic activities. A son of a baker and with little education, Lembcke married the daughter of a wealthy army officer. Due to health concerns, Lembcke retired from a minor position in the Treasury at the age of only 40, and 'devoted the rest of his life to philanthropic activities' – with the animal protection cause at centre (Degen & Thamdrup 1925, pp. 9–20).

³¹⁵ This was printed on the colophon of the 1891 edition. Bold font from the original.

³¹⁶ According to the 1891 annual report of the Kristiania association, the initiative came from Lembcke, and 2,000 copies of the petition to be spread in Norway were paid for by Lembcke (*Beretning 1891*, p. 12).

³¹⁷ Brantz 2002.

³¹⁸ *Dyrevennen*, No. 11, 1891, p. 81. Among the 138 petitioners were famous figures in the Scandinavian public such as Edvard Brandes, Camilla Collett, Henrik Ibsen, Fridtjof Nansen, Viktor Rydberg, and Gunnar Wennerberg. A striking feature about the list of the Norwegian petitioners is the presence of six female petitioners. Apart from these, all the remaining 132 petitioners were men.

Christendom'.³¹⁹ Noteworthy is that the petition, in contrast to the German petition some years earlier,³²⁰ did *not* mention the Jewish slaughter method, and was mainly directed at the butcher profession generally. In fact, with the exception of the Swedish 'Nordic Animal Protection Association' [Nordiska Djurskyddsföreningen], which published a number of clearly anti-Semitic articles in its journal *Djurskyddet* in the early 1890s,³²¹ none of the major Scandinavian animal protection associations attacked the Jewish slaughter method in this period.

Reactions in Norway: Accusations of Anti-Semitism

The 1891 petition was mostly met with silence by the general Norwegian public. However, a few months after its publication, a long article on the subject 'Slaughtering' appeared in the newspaper *Verdens Gang*. The article was written by the director of the government's Veterinary Authority,³²² Dr. Ole Malm. While doubting that the petition would have much effect, Malm concurred with the animal protection movement's struggle for slaughter reform. Malm, however, meant that humane standards within the slaughter profession could be introduced only through legislation and by establishing public slaughterhouses where slaughtering could be monitored by proper authorities. Malm also described and discussed the different slaughter methods from a humane viewpoint, and concluded that the neck-stab method was the least painful among existing slaughter methods. He denounced the use of Bruneau's mask because it introduced a cane into the animal's brain, and likewise the use of the shooting mask because of the risk of gunshot wounds. The Jewish and Muslim slaughter methods were described by Malm as 'barbaric to watch'. However, instead of denouncing these methods, Malm only referred to attempts to prohibit shechita in Germany, and said that German Jews considered them an undue intervention in their religious freedom.³²³

The petition also gave impetus to the submission of a number of inquiries to the Ministry of Justice by local animal protection associations around the country, urging it to include a paragraph on slaughtering in the draft for the new penal code.³²⁴ Taking the main message

³¹⁹ *Beretning 1891*, p. 12.

³²⁰ Brantz 2002, p. 175.

³²¹ Dirke 2000, p. 199. It is also worth noting that the Nordic Association was not represented in the petition.

³²² Until 1890, the Veterinary Authority [Veterinærvesenet] was placed under the Ministry of Justice, thereafter the Ministry of the Interior from 1890, and finally the Ministry of Agriculture since 1900 (Kolsrud 2012, p. 200).

³²³ Malm 1892. The article was not signed, but Malm identifies himself as the author in his newspaper scrapbook (Archives of The Veterinary Institute, Oslo).

³²⁴ A list of the inquiries can be found in *Dyrenes Ven* 1902, No. 1, p. 2.

from the 1891 petition a step further, the animal protection associations demanded a paragraph in the penal code that would make slaughtering without stunning not only undesirable, but also a criminal act. The Ministry of Justice found that regulating slaughter practices had no place in the penal code, and forwarded the inquiries to the Ministry of the Interior,³²⁵ where the director of the Veterinary Authority, the very same Ole Malm, was made responsible for processing the petitions and for answering the animal protection movement on the government's behalf.

In light of his own initiative in 1892, Malm's response to the animal protection associations' initiative a few years later was remarkable. Instead of replying with a letter written in the bureaucratic tone of a government official, Malm published an extensive article on the subject of slaughter methods in the journal of the Veterinary Association of Norway a few years later. In it, he claimed that the animal protection movement's campaign against methods not involving stunning was in fact motivated by hatred of Jews. He also issued a press release on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture in which he referred to his article and concluded that the Ministry 'did not see any reason to act on the matter at the present moment'.³²⁶ In the 34-page article 'On slaughter and its relation to the question of animal cruelty', Malm devoted 24 pages to discussing whether the Jewish method of slaughter could be considered animal cruelty. He also compared the Jewish method with methods involving stunning, and concluded that 'all kinds of slaughter methods are cruel', however 'the Jewish slaughter method is in fact no more cruel than other methods, even though it may appear more painful'.³²⁷ Malm expressed sympathy for the work of the animal protection movement, but claimed that the 'agitation against kosher butchering is in fact mixed with a larger portion of a purely anti-Semitic tendency'.³²⁸

Ten years later, Malm repeated and intensified his accusations of anti-Semitism in the animal protection movement. In 1910, when the question of a local prohibition of kosher butchering was discussed for the first time in the municipal council of Kristiania, Malm, now acting as a member of the council for the Liberal Party, warned against the consequences a prohibition would have for the city's small Jewish community. He claimed that demands for a ban

³²⁵ The National Archives, The Ministry of Justice [Justisdepartementet]: Lovavdelingen. Journal 1896-1899.

³²⁶ The National Archives, The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet V. Kopibøker og registre. Kopibok nr. 26 (juni-des. 1900), fol. 1682.

³²⁷ Malm 1900, p. 114.

³²⁸ Malm 1900, p. 114.

resulted from anti-Semitic tendencies within the animal protection movement: 'It is not the animals one wishes to protect, but to persecute the Jews. The struggle against kosher butchering is intimately connected with political, religious and race issues'.³²⁹ Malm's accusations in 1900 and 1910 inevitably raise the question whether Norway's animal protection movement was influenced by an 'anti-Semitic tendency' during the 1890s and the first decade of the 1900s.

It is tempting to take Malm's accusations for granted, or to project the rhetoric of some animal protectionists during the conclusive phase of the kosher slaughtering affair in the 1920s back to the turn of the century, as has been the case in the historiography. However, to try to trace a continuous anti-Semitic campaign against kosher butchering back to the 1890s, and thus explain the prohibition as being due to a prolonged hatred against Jews in the Norwegian animal protection movement, offers a number of problems. First, there are hardly any explicit anti-Semitic characteristics in the journals of the movement during this period. In fact, the kosher slaughtering question appeared relatively seldom in the journals, and was far by the most important cause for the movement in this period. For instance, the campaigns against vivisection or against using stuffed birds in women's hats received an equal, if not greater, degree of attention. Secondly, the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania reacted promptly to Malm's accusations in its journal *Dyrenes Ven* by denying that such tendencies existed in the Norwegian animal protection movement. In fact, Georg Sverdrup, the leader of the Kristiania association, denied after Malm's first attack in 1900 that the animal protection movement had brought up the question of kosher slaughtering in Norway *at all*. He claimed that the slaughter reform campaign was mainly directed against Christian butchers and farmers, especially in remote places where stunning methods still were to be introduced.³³⁰

Thirdly, there is reason to believe that Malm interpreted the agitation against slaughtering without previous stunning in Norway as analogous to the agitation in Switzerland and Germany, where it largely was directed against kosher slaughtering, and in many cases motivated by anti-Jewish resentments. After spending several years studying in France, Germany and the UK in the late 1880s, Malm was well acquainted with debates in Europe concerning animal welfare, and he could not have avoided noticing the hostile agitation

³²⁹ Malm later published excerpts from his speech in the council meeting on December 12, 1910 in the journal of the Norwegian Veterinarian Association (Malm 1911, p. 54).

³³⁰ *Dyrenes Ven* 1900, Oct., p. 78.

against Jews from German animal protection associations. Malm also referred to the German debate in his 1892 *Verdens Gang* article, and in 1911 he referred to the abolition of the kosher slaughter prohibition in the Kingdom of Saxony the previous year.³³¹

However, there is also reason to believe that Malm had other intentions with his attacks on the animal protection movement. At least his reaction corresponds well to his handling of another issue concerning animal protectionists and the penal code, namely the agitation against vivisection. As suggested in the previous chapter's discussion on the animal protection movement, there existed a deep distrust among animal protectionists towards science and scientific expertise, and in both the Norwegian anti-vivisection campaign and the anti-shechita campaign, Ole Malm became the main target of criticism. When the committee preparing the new penal code, after pressure from the animal protection movement, included an exemption for experiments on live animals in the proposed penal code's paragraph on animal cruelty, Malm publicly condemned this as an attempt to label vivisection as animal cruelty, along with 'neglect, overexertion, severe or vicious mistreatment of animals'. Malm defended vivisection as being necessary for bacteriological research, and claimed it had no place in the penal code.³³² According to Malm, the entire anti-vivisection movement was 'a big misunderstanding'.³³³

However, according to historian of science Kristin Asdal, the animal protectionists had succeeded in framing the vivisection issue as an animal protection cause in the drafting of the new penal code. In the proposed legislation, the animal protection had gained acceptance for including lay persons in the surveillance of animals experiments in medical research. Asdal regards this development as symptomatic of a larger trend in Norwegian politics in this period, as new groups promoting popular enlightenment, such as the animal protection movement, increasingly challenged the hegemony of the traditional 'Bildungsbürgertum' [dannelsesborgerskapet]. Consequently, lay opinions gained new weight in fields normally reserved to scientific expertise, and Asdal builds this argument on the historian Rune Slagstad's claim that lay judgements increasingly were replacing formal expertise in the politics of the Liberal State.³³⁴ Hence, Malm may have feared that the animal protection movement would also succeed in framing the Jewish slaughter method as an animal

³³¹ Ole Malm 1911, p. 56. The prohibition was in force from March 21, 1892 until December 20, 1910.

³³² Asdal 2006b, pp. 277–279.

³³³ Asdal 2006b, p. 281.

³³⁴ Asdal 2006b, p. 287.

protection cause, and thereby gain politicians' support at the expense of veterinary expertise in a similar way as in the vivisection issue. As we will see, this was exactly what happened, and the Jewish slaughter method was to play a significant part in the Norwegian animal protection movement's agitation for improved slaughter methods, contrary to what would be the case in Denmark.

Reactions in Denmark: Shechita Protected

Also in Denmark, the animal protection movement rallied government and parliament with its demand for legislation on slaughtering. Through numerous inquiries to the cabinet and the parliament, Counsellor of Justice Lembcke succeeded in 1898 in bringing the issue of slaughter reform to the attention of the Danish parliament, *Rigsdagen*.³³⁵ The same year, the cabinet submitted to Rigsdagen a proposed law on the transporting and slaughtering of animals. The bill contained a paragraph on previous stunning, which, however, exempted the Danish-American method and shechita from the requirement of previous stunning.³³⁶ The proposal submitted in 1898 was later dropped by the committee appointed to study it, and subsequent parliamentary debates on the issue (in 1913 and 1929) did not lead to any form of legislation.³³⁷ Metcalf has explained the failure of these proposals – and consequently the lack of a shechita prohibition in Denmark – on the basis of the economic interests of the Danish pork export business. Metcalf argues that since the Danish-American method did not involve previous stunning, a prohibition of shechita would also have necessitated a ban on the Danish-American method. Thus, prioritising business interests' over animal protection happened to spare the Jewish slaughter method from any kind of regulation in Denmark, as opposed to Norway.³³⁸ Although Metcalf notes that the Danish animal protection movement did not favour a prohibition of shechita when the proposal first came up in 1898, he adds no weight to this argument in his concluding comparison of the Scandinavian debates on Jewish religious slaughter. Rather, he explains the lack of any prohibition in Denmark mainly by citing economic interests of the pork export industry, although he also takes into account that Danish Jews were better integrated in society than were Norwegian Jews.³³⁹ The fact that the Danish animal protection movement never developed an exclusively negative discourse on shechita,

³³⁵ Probably also with the help of his friend, the MP Niels Jacob Larsen (Engelstoft 1938, pp. 228–229). See also Lembcke's own account of the bill's history in Lembcke 1900, p. 62.

³³⁶ The entire proposal is cited in *Dyrevennen*, No. 12, 1898. pp. 90–91.

³³⁷ Metcalf 1989, p. 44.

³³⁸ Metcalf 1989, p. 45.

³³⁹ Metcalf 1989, p. 46.

as opposed to its Norwegian counterpart, is underestimated by Metcalf, and will be at the centre of the following analysis of the discursive formation of the slaughtering issue in the two movements, respectively.

Ritual Slaughter and the Semantics of the Humane

The years around the turn of the century are central in the formation of a discourse in which negative representations of shechita played an important function. An examination of the arguments used in the Norwegian animal protection movement's publications reveals that especially the religious, or 'ritual', nature of kosher slaughter was consistently contrasted to the conception of the 'humane'. This becomes even clearer when comparing with Denmark, where the discourse on shechita was characterised by a much more ambiguous tendency, stressing both negative and positive features of shechita. In Denmark, shechita was sometimes contrasted to the Danish-American method as a humane slaughter method, other times conceived merely as a tolerable intermediate category between the 'humane' stunning methods and the 'inhumane' Danish-American method.

When reading articles addressing kosher slaughter in the Norwegian animal protectionist journals, certain words, phrases and concepts stand out. In almost every article, the 'ritual' slaughtering is contrasted to the often unspecified entity of the 'humane'. Since this entity rarely was elaborated further, other than establishing that it was diametrically opposite to the atrocities of the Jews, this may be read as what the German conceptual historian Koselleck dubs an 'asymmetrical counterconcept'. According to Koselleck, 'A political or social agency is first constituted through concepts by means of which it circumscribes itself and hence excludes others, and therefore, by means of which it defines itself'.³⁴⁰ In this case, Koselleck may be read as if excluding the notion of Jewish 'ritual' slaughter contributed to define the 'humane' agency of animal protectionists. Said in simpler terms: If 'we' are against the Jewish slaughter method, 'we' are also humane. Thus, the counterconcepts of the 'humane' and the 'ritual' also mirror the opposition between 'us' and 'them'. The German sociologist Klaus Holz has also demonstrated how counterconcepts not are limited to designating groups, but includes semantic structures of related concepts. For instance, the German 'Geist'

³⁴⁰ Koselleck 2004, p. 155.

(mind/intellect) and ‘Geld’ (money) were contrasted with ‘foreign ideas’ and ‘Jewish capital’.³⁴¹

The critique of the Jewish slaughter method almost always emerged from a semantic opposition between the ‘Norwegian’, ‘North European’ or ‘Christian’ on one side, and the ‘Jewish’ or ‘foreign’ on the other side. Rather than advocating the preferred humane slaughter methods by positive means, the animal protection movement attacked the Jewish method on the basis of its religious and ritual character, and applied this negative counterconcept in order to form their own position and argument in the debate. In their struggle for more humane slaughter methods, the Jewish slaughter practice became the victim for the need of excluding ‘others’. The development of these sets of counterconcepts, that of ‘us’ and ‘them’, and that of the ‘humane’ and the ‘ritual’, later contributed to attract the attention of activists that were not primarily concerned with animal rights, but who identified themselves with the ‘us’ of the debate, including agrarian nationalists and radical anti-Semites.

Within the animal protection movement, the counterconcepts of ‘us’ and ‘them’ were not connected only to the negation of ‘Jewishness’. Descriptions of animal cruelty in Southern Europe were interpreted to indirectly be caused by the Catholic religion, while protestant northern Europeans were considered as having an almost instinctive sense of compassion for animals. Thus, there will be argued that a closer look at the animal protection movement’s discourse in this period reveals that the movement was characterised by a tendency not unlike what Malm claimed, although not explicitly anti-Semitic or motivated by an anti-Semitic ideology, such as Malm had in mind concerning Germany. In this semantic structure, kosher slaughter was not understood merely as one method among many, but as a symbol of a moral or metaphysical opposition: the ‘ritual’ versus the ‘humane’.³⁴²

The Cruel ‘Ritual’

One of the first issues of the Norwegian movement’s newly established journal *Dyrenes Ven* in 1897 included an article that examined the Jewish method. The article was based on a lecture by one of Sweden’s leading animal protectionists, the veterinary John Vennerholm.³⁴³

³⁴¹ Holz 2004, p. 47.

³⁴² The wording is borrowed from the British scholar Brian Klug, although his analysis of the animal protection movement in Britain in the 1980s also includes halal butchering (Klug 1989, p. 22).

³⁴³ John Vennerholm (1858–1931) was a professor in surgery and ophthalmology at the Veterinary Institute in Stockholm from 1890, and later from 1902 director of the same institution. When the Institute was reorganised into the Swedish School of Veterinary Medicine (Veterinärhögskolan) in 1915, Vennerholm was named its first

Vennerholm's lecture brought up the need for more humane and rational slaughter methods, and discussed the nature and characteristics of several methods. He divided the methods into two main categories: those that involved previous stunning and those that did not. Among the methods without stunning, the Jewish method received extensive attention: 'The Jewish slaughter method [...] is associated with a number of flaws, which make it unacceptable from a humane point of view'.³⁴⁴ Even though his condemnation was cautious compared to what would be published in the same journal some twenty years later, we may observe that the Jewish method was not consistent with a 'humane point of view', and that it could be ruled out from the 'rational', and thus legitimate methods the movement sought to introduce. Vennerholm further admitted that 'on me, [...] the [Jewish] slaughtering made a particularly crude and disgusting impression'. In order to justify his view on shechita, Vennerholm concluded his article with an overview of the laws that forbade or regulated the Jewish method abroad: 'Slaughtering after the Jewish rite has *caused* regulations in several countries'.³⁴⁵

What is perhaps most remarkable about Vennerholm's article – and most of the other articles discussing slaughter methods in *Dyrenes Ven* – is not so much the condemnation of the Jewish method, as what he did not condemn. As we have seen earlier in this chapter from the accounts of the animal protection movement and Nils Lid's study from 1924, the traditional slaughter customs were far from eradicated in Scandinavia by the turn of the century. In his newspaper article from 1892, Malm reported that the slaughter method used by Christian farmers and butchers in remote places in Scandinavia was not much different from the Jewish method, except that the former did not involve the Hebrew blessing and was not required to be conducted by a specially trained shochet. Even though shooting masks had become more common – thanks mainly to the animal protection movement – the traditional methods without stunning were not still in use only in remote places as Malm had claimed in 1892 and his colleague Nielsen-Sæther some years earlier. A short notice in *Dyrenes Ven* later in 1897 reveals that shooting masks were as yet not used by butchers in Norway's second largest city, Bergen: 'As skilled men of their profession, they claim that the use of the shooting mask

rector, a position he held until his retirement in 1925. Vennerholm was also a leading figure in the Swedish animal protection movement, and had been editor of the journal *Djurvännan* in the 1880s.

³⁴⁴ *Dyrenes Ven* 1897, p. 55.

³⁴⁵ *Dyrenes Ven* 1898, No. 1, p. 6. My italics.

delays their work'.³⁴⁶ In this rare report of animal cruelty conducted by non-Jewish butchers, their opposition to the shooting masks is symptomatically excused by citing their professional pride, whereas the Jewish practice never was excused on the basis of religion, or in any other way. However, reports such as this from Bergen became fewer and fewer, and most of the attention in the slaughter reform issue was directed towards the Jewish slaughter method.³⁴⁷

The Jewish slaughter method was commonly labelled with adjectives such as 'crude', 'repulsive', 'disgusting', 'tasteless', 'violent', 'cruel', 'gruesome', 'uncivilised', 'barbaric', 'outrageous', 'inhumane', 'wicked', 'insane', 'godless', and so on.³⁴⁸ In addition, it was usually commented that the Jewish slaughter method was contrary to 'humane methods' – for instance, a Kristiania butcher that previously had assisted the Jewish community with shechita, stated to *Dyrenes Ven* in 1900, that he 'no longer could be a part of it', and that 'this [method] is more gruesome than the humane slaughter methods'.³⁴⁹ An anonymous letter from an animal protectionist, with the heading 'Religious Fanaticism and Animal Cruelty', published in *Dyrenes Ven* in 1902, described in a similar vein the slaughtering of an animal according to the Jewish method. In a Kristiania butchery, the submitter had witnessed how 'An old Jew with a huge knife' had begun cutting the throat of a cow, unaffected by the sufferings of the animal. 'I then asked why they did not slaughter the *normal* way [paa vanlig vis], and what the *purpose* with such inhumanity was'. Unsatisfied with the answer, the submitter concluded never to have seen anything more barbaric, and that the act was 'beyond madness'.³⁵⁰ In this letter, the submitter not only contrasted shechita with the 'normal way', but by asking about the purpose, also identified the sufferings as something being inflicted intentionally. This notion is also found in an article in *Dyrenes Ven* the following year, regarding a proposal for a ban on shechita submitted to the Swedish parliament, the Riksdag. In the article, a speech by MP Edvard Wavrinsky was quoted. Wavrinsky claimed to have observed the practice of shechita in a Berlin slaughterhouse, and 'had asked some of the men employed at the slaughterhouse about the expediency [Hensigtsmessighed] of the Jewish

³⁴⁶ *Dyrenes Ven* 1897, No. 12, p. 74.

³⁴⁷ Exceptions to this may be found in the critique directed to the pork-export slaughterhouse in the outskirts of Kristiania, and to a certain extent also the critique against reindeer slaughtering among the Sami: see *Dyrenes Ven* 1900, No. 11, p. 87; *Dyrenes Ven* 1906, No. 10, and *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1903, p. 22.

³⁴⁸ *Dyrenes Ven* 1897, No. 8, p. 63; 1898, No. 10, p. 83; 1900, No. 10, p. 78; 1902, p. 59; 1903, p. 27; 1908, p. 78, 1909, p. 33, and 1911, No. 4, p. 27.

³⁴⁹ *Dyrenes Ven* 1900, p. 78.

³⁵⁰ *Dyrenes Ven* 1902, p. 59. My italics. The letter had originally been published in the newspaper *Morgenbladet*.

slaughter method'. He was told that it was 'a pointless and gruesome animal abuse'. In the same article, veterinary Vennerholm expressed his support for Wavrinsky's proposal.³⁵¹

None of our larger domestic animals should be slaughtered without previous stunning. This must be established by law, and if some religious ritual prescribes something else, then it must be reformed in the name of mankind and humanity.³⁵²

That a religious practice must be subordinated to civil legislation is not the most interesting thing about this statement. Rather, the need for Judaism to be reformed in the name of *mankind and humanity*, suggests that Judaism in itself was regarded as an inhumane religion for allowing shechita to take place. Wavrinsky's proposal was also discussed in the journal of the Norwegian Women's Animal Protection Association, *Dyrenes Beskytter*. With reference to shechita, the journal explained that currently in Sweden animal rights advocates were fighting 'vigorously against this barbaric slaughter method, which is so contradictory to all humane treatment of animals'. One of those fighting the Jewish slaughter method in Sweden was F. A. Wingborg, editor of the animal protection journal *Djurskyddet*, who for a long time had worked to disseminate knowledge about 'the Jews' cruel killing of the animals'.³⁵³ According to Karin Dirke, F. A. Wingborg, who had written a number of anti-Semitic pieces against shechita in his journal *Djurskyddet*, did not have many followers in the Swedish animal protection movement precisely because of his extreme views.³⁵⁴ Apparently, his views were not regarded problematic by the Norwegian Women's Association, who quoted Wingborg on several other occasions.

Reactions to the Finnish Prohibition

Apart from the bill proposed in the Swedish Riksdag and occasional anonymous reports,³⁵⁵ kosher slaughtering received little attention in the Norwegian animal protection journals the following years, until the issue was raised in Finland from around 1906. Developments in Finland were monitored carefully by the Norwegian animal protection movement, and both *Dyrenes Ven* and *Dyrenes Beskytter* reported frequently about their Finnish sister organisation's struggle against kosher butchering. In 1907 a news report in *Dyrenes Ven*

³⁵¹ Edvard Wavrinsky (1848–1924) had already sought to introduce a bill prohibiting shechita in 1902, and attempted the same again in 1909; however, none of these bills received much support (Metcalf 1989, p. 40).

³⁵² *Dyrenes Ven* 1903, No. 4, p. 27.

³⁵³ *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1906, No. 1, p. 2.

³⁵⁴ Dirke 2000, p. 199.

³⁵⁵ One of these anonymous letters caused one of the butcheries used by the Jews of Kristiania to refuse to sell more cattle to the Jews, and the association encouraged other butchers to follow the example of this butcher (*Dyrenes Ven* 1906, p. 34).

stated that the Finnish movement worked for a law that would force Finnish Jews to ‘comply with the current humane slaughtering regulations’.³⁵⁶ Another report a year later stated that the Finnish Animal Protection Association had reported the Jewish community to the police and had asked police for special surveillance of the Helsingfors synagogue because of how Finnish Jews slaughtered chickens. The Finnish association ‘complained about the cruelty that Jews apply in slaughtering chickens killed in accordance with the Jews’ religious commandments’.³⁵⁷ After the prohibition was enforced in 1909, some Finnish Jews apparently continued the practice of shechita in slaughtering chickens, and a short notice in *Dyrenes Beskytter* in 1910 stated that the ‘Jew-Rabbi’ [Jøderabbinen] of Åbo had been fined for animal cruelty after having slaughtered chicken ‘according to the Jewish ritual by breaking the wings and picking the feathers’ before he had killed the animal.³⁵⁸

From these accounts, one may assume that the alleged cruelty that occurred was perceived not only as a negative side effect of the ritual (intended or not) – one has the impression that it was cruelty *itself* that primarily characterised the Jewish method. This notion was elaborated in an article by the Finnish animal protectionist Agnes von Konow in *Dyrenes Beskytter*: ‘The Jews still adhere to the barbaric notion that killing of animals is some kind of sacrificial service, a bloody cultic act, in which the animals must suffer consciously’.³⁵⁹ This was printed in *Dyrenes Beskytter* without any further comment, other than to praise von Konow and the Finnish animal protection movement for their exemplary ‘wise and vigorous struggle’.³⁶⁰ The practice itself was not described in detail in this article in *Dyrenes Beskytter*, nor in any other. This article was, however, provided with a footnote that explained why: ‘We want to protect our readers from any further description of the Jewish slaughter method, which incidentally should be well known by most of us’.³⁶¹ An editorial in *Dyrenes Ven* expressed similar views about ‘this wicked, barbaric manner in which orthodox Jews demand the slaughter animals killed’,³⁶² and the editor, Johannes Smith, had no doubt that ‘any enlightened and

³⁵⁶ *Dyrenes Ven* 1907, p. 74.

³⁵⁷ *Dyrenes Ven* 1908, p. 74.

³⁵⁸ *Dyrenes Ven* 1910, p. 23.

³⁵⁹ *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1910, No. 1, p. 9.

³⁶⁰ *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1910, No. 1, p. 11.

³⁶¹ *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1910, No. 1, p. 11.

³⁶² *Dyrenes Ven* 1909, No. 5, p. 33. The exact same formula was repeated several times the following year; see *Dyrenes Ven* 1910, No. 1, p. 2.

conscientious human being' yearned for the day that Norway would follow Finland, Saxony and Switzerland.³⁶³

Rituals of the Past

The strong emphasis on characterising shechita as a barbaric, inhuman, uncivilised religious rite may be explained by awareness of one's own problematic near past. With descriptions of traditional Norwegian slaughter methods in mind – methods that to a certain extent still were used at the turn of the century – one may assume that the previously unknown Jewish slaughter method was interpreted by animal protectionists in the context of traditional slaughter methods, rather than on its own terms. This would not be very surprising – for outsiders, descriptions of shechita must have resembled descriptions of traditional slaughter methods by animal protectionists in previous decades. The often troublesome casting and the binding of the legs, the lack of previous stunning, the cutting of the throat while some kind of spell or magical formula was being said, and the subsequent prolonged sufferings of the animal, were all elements from traditional methods recognisable in kosher slaughter for an untrained eye. However, when not studying the Jewish slaughter method on its own terms, the essential difference between the two slaughter methods becomes unclear. The original intention of shechita had been to make the animal bleed to death as effectively and painlessly as possible. In contrast, the intention behind many traditional Scandinavian slaughter methods had been either to delay the loss of consciousness as long as possible after the initial stab or cut, to make the animal bleed slowly in order to collect the blood, or simply, based on superstition, to cause the animal as much pain as possible before it died. Thus, for animal protectionists, any slaughter method grounded on a ritual rather than 'rational' or 'humane' methods was perceived a priori as cruel.

Karin Dirke, in her study of the Swedish animal protection movement, argued that slaughtering of animals was perceived as a form of sacrifice and that the animals themselves were perceived as sacrificial objects. As in Norway, few, if any, animal protectionists argued against the killing of domestic animals in principle.³⁶⁴ However, to fulfil their purpose as food for human beings, animals would have to pay with their lives. Thus, the animals' sacrifice for

³⁶³ *Dyrenes Ven* 1909, No. 5, p. 33. Johannes Natanael Smith (1870–1946) was editor of *Dyrenes Ven* and secretary of the Kristiania association for over thirty years from 1904 until he retired in the 1930s. He also worked as a science teacher in a Kristiania high school.

³⁶⁴ There was even an outspoken opposition to vegetarianism; see *Dyrenes Ven* 1899, No. 12, p. 83.

a higher purpose was necessary, and the slaughter animals were often referred to as ‘innocents’ or ‘martyrs’, thus becoming objects for a subtle anthropomorphism. As long as their ‘sacrifice’ was conducted as painlessly as possible, however, it was regarded a legitimate form of sacrifice, in contrast to the primitive *ritual* sacrifice known from traditional slaughter methods – or, in this case, the Jewish method.³⁶⁵ From this line of reasoning, we may presume that animal protectionists believed that Jews regarded the slaughter animal as a profane animal that was transformed to a sacred object *after* (or during) its killing/sacrifice, while animal protectionists themselves regarded the slaughter animal as a sacred, anthropomorphic being *before* the killing. Thus, animal protectionists’ assumption of how low the Jews regarded animals before the killing made the Jewish slaughter method appear as a reversal of animal protectionists’ own conception of the ideal slaughter act.

This view, of course, was based on a theological misconception of shechita as a sacrificial rite;³⁶⁶ however, given the sparse knowledge of contemporary Judaism in Norway at that point, this misconception is hardly surprising. The conception of shechita as a religious rite was by no means unique in Norway; it also appeared in German discourse on Jewish slaughtering practice. From his research on German debates about kosher slaughter, Shai Lavi observes that what was originally not conceived by Jews as a religious ritual, merely a religious duty or commandment (*mitzvah*), was increasingly understood by the non-Jewish majority as a religious rite with a symbolic meaning. This process of ritualisation appeared simultaneously with the demand to rationalise the very same practice. Thus, to comprehend the Jewish slaughter method, contemporary observers searched for a deeper symbolic meaning behind the practice, and thus perceived shechita as a ritual in the Christian sense. Lavi’s argument about the ritualisation, or ‘enchantment’ of shechita in the late 19th century is based on the American anthropologist Talal Asad’s theory that the modern notion of ritual has replaced traditional notions of ritual as ‘a set of practices the importance of which lay not in their meaning, but rather in precise adherence to the detail of these well-prescribed rules of conduct’. This older notion of ritual persisted longer in Judaism, and therefore Christian observers projected their ‘modern’ understanding of ritual as something with symbolic meaning upon the Jewish slaughter practice.³⁶⁷ Thus, in this semantic field, the Jewish

³⁶⁵ Dirke 2000, p. 206.

³⁶⁶ As explained in the introductory chapters, the practice of shechita is derived from the prohibition of consuming blood rather than from the ancient animal sacrifice in the temple in Jerusalem.

³⁶⁷ Lavi 2011.

slaughter method was transformed from a commandement to a ritual in order to become comprehensible for Christian observers. This confusion will also explain why animal protectionists referred to shechita with terms such as ‘sacrifice’, a ‘religious service’ or a ‘cultic act’.

Jews and Catholics

The awareness of the Nordic slaughter ‘rites’ of the past (or even at present) was difficult to reconcile with the notion of being a Christian, animal-loving people. Such atrocities were foreign, not domestic, and negative feelings towards these slaughter methods were projected onto Jews. As we shall see in this section, this uncertainty of one’s own identity as an animal-loving people did not affect only Jews. The animal protection movement’s self-perception as humane, civilised and compassionate was not based only on a negation of the ‘ritual’ and the ‘Jewish’. These two designations fit into a larger conceptual scheme whereby Protestant Northern Europeans were perceived as more civilised and compassionate in their relations with animals than were Southern Europeans. In descriptions of how animals were treated in other parts of Europe, maltreatment of animals in Mediterranean countries was always explained by citing the strong position of the Catholic Church in these countries. Keith Thomas describes this as

a belief which by Victorian times had become an entrenched conviction: that the unhappiest animals were those of the Latin countries of southern Europe, because it was there that the old Catholic doctrine that animals had no souls was still maintained.³⁶⁸

Catholic Christians were perceived to be less concerned with the well-being of animals than Protestants were because of the bad influence from the Catholic clergy and hierarchy. For the Latin countries, animal maltreatment was also regarded as an inheritance from their Roman and ‘pagan ancestors’, in contrast to the animal-loving ancient Greeks.

According to several articles regarding the state of animal welfare in France and the Mediterrean countries, lay Catholic Christians were not allowed by their clergy to think for themselves, and remained uncivilised and uneducated.³⁶⁹ Because the Church taught that animals had no soul, its clergy supposedly did not feel any compassion with animals, and

³⁶⁸ Thomas 1984, p. 144.

³⁶⁹ *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1903, No. 6, p. 25. This article continues with a catalogue of all the kinds of animal cruelty observed by the author in France.

therefore neither did the lay people. This notion was expressed in *Dyrenes Ven* by the Norwegian-American Unitarian minister and author Kristofer Janson (1841–1917), who in a 1903 article claimed that animal cruelty in Italy was caused by the clergy's attitudes: 'The priests have taught the people that animals have no soul, hence it does not matter how you treat them'. Janson also reminded readers that 'The land of bullfighting is also home of the Inquisition. The first is related to the other'.³⁷⁰ An article in *Dyrenes Beskytter* in 1912, reprinted from the Swedish *Djurskyddet*, related differences in attitudes towards animals between Northern and Southern Europeans to how the ancient Greeks and Romans treated their animals. According to the author, also a protestant clergyman, the Romans were known from classical sources to have treated animals far more cruelly than ancient Greeks did. The Greeks had been known for their great compassion for animals, and had treated animals equally with slaves, according to the clergyman. The Romans, on the other hand, were known to have had a purely instrumental attitude towards animals, which often meant that the animals were made to suffer. After having presented an example of this attitude from the writings of Cato, the author added that the 'contemporary Romans have no compassion for animals either'. Their lack of compassion was explained by the 'complete lack of sense of responsibility among Catholic priests', and further that 'with such teachers, there is no surprise that the people descend to the shameful and vulgar sin of animal cruelty'.

The author concluded his reprimand by describing the 'Roman Catholic peoples' as 'the worst animal abusers in the world'. True Christian compassion towards animals had occurred only among the 'Germanic, Protestant peoples', who had maintained the true compassion for animals found among ancient Greeks.³⁷¹ Another piece in *Dyrenes Ven*, in 1914, compared the way animals were treated in different parts of the world according to religion, and concluded that in Catholic countries of Southern Europe, treatment of animals was the worst in the entire world. This was ascribed the legacy from the Romans, who had failed to adopt the ancient Greek attitudes towards animals. The author also questioned whether people in these countries also had failed to adopt Christian attitudes towards animals: 'Even in the "most Christian", highly enlightened countries in the civilised West of today, grand entertainment in cruelties such as bull fighting and cock fighting take place'. The ancient

³⁷⁰ *Dyrenes Ven*, 1903, No. 4, p. 26. For Janson's view of Judaism and Jews, see Kopperud 2011.

³⁷¹ *Dyrenes Beskytter*, 1912, p. 55.

‘Roman cruelty’ was still prevailing in Rome, a city ‘which still is known as a paradise for priests and hell for animals’.³⁷²

This antagonism towards the conceived attitudes about animals among Jews and Catholics had a crucial role in self-definition of the northern european animal protection movement. Also negative images of other groups such as Gypsies, Travellers, and black people fulfilled a similar role in the world view of the animal protection movement. For instance, a 1905 article in *Dyrenes Beskytter* could tell that ‘apes hate Negros’, and that antipathy towards black people was common among animals in Africa.³⁷³ The movement understood itself by its Christian, humane, compassionate and just attitudes towards all animals. As with the case of kosher slaughter, however, this identity was not defined only by positive means, but was primarily constructed in opposition to ‘foreign’ attitudes to animals. This understanding was to a certain degree also present in the Danish animal protection movement; however, it related only to Catholic nations in Southern Europe, and rarely to the Jews. The following section will examine how the issue of shechita was treated in the Danish animal protectionist journal *Dyrevennen*, and will suggest why it adopted a far more ambiguous attitude, which ultimately resulted in a defence for allowing Danish Jews to slaughter according to their religious commandments.

The Danish Animal Protection Movement and Shechita

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, shechita had probably been practiced among Danish Jews ever since they were allowed to establish religious congregations in 1684. By the first half of the 19th century, there were Jewish butchers in Copenhagen and most larger provincial towns having a Jewish community. When the slaughter reform campaign also appeared on the Danish animal protection movement’s agenda in the 1880s, the issue of shechita was inevitably addressed. There were several critical objections to shechita in the initial period of the slaughter reform campaign in the 1880s, but the criticism was of another kind than in Norway. Negative characteristics applied in the Norwegian animal protectionist journals were rarely used, and objections were centred on questions regarding hygiene,³⁷⁴ the prohibitions in Switzerland and Saxony,³⁷⁵ and problems related to the preparations and casting of the

³⁷² *Dyrenes Ven* 1914, No. 7, p. 56.

³⁷³ *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1905, No. 1, p. 15.

³⁷⁴ *Dyrevennen* 1889, No. 8, p. 58 and 1890, No. 10, p. 79.

³⁷⁵ *Dyrevennen* 1892, No. 8–9, p. 62; 1893, No. 9–10, p. 66; and 1894, No. 1, p. 2.

animals.³⁷⁶ In those cases where the lack of previous stunning was discussed, articles were far less judgmental than in Norway.³⁷⁷ Although many articles concluded that the use of shechita prolonged the death struggle and the sufferings of animals, an examination of *Dyrevennen* from the late 1880s up until around 1915 shows that characteristics like ‘barbaric’, ‘repulsive’, ‘cruel’, or ‘inhumane’ appear relatively rarely compared to their appearance in Norwegian journals, and not least in comparison with the frequent occurrence of neutral or positive assessments of shechita.

One of the few exceptions to the neutral or positive assessments of shechita appeared in connection with the 1893 Swiss referendum. In reviewing events of 1893, the editor of *Dyrevennen* commented that the ‘barbaric, old, oriental kosher butchering’ had been abolished by the referendum in Switzerland.³⁷⁸ Although the journal was careful to distance itself from any anti-Semitism, it failed to realise the motivation behind the prohibition in Switzerland. In another comment on the Swiss referendum, the editor could inform, that

Many, who know the conditions in Switzerland well, assure that there is no animosity against Jews, however, the Jews’ insistence on kosher butchering has long stood in the way of full implementation of the slaughter reform.³⁷⁹

Judging from this excerpt, one may get the impression that Jews were against any slaughter reform whatsoever, and purposely sabotaged slaughter reform in Switzerland. However, when commenting on domestic affairs, *Dyrevennen* assumed a cautious and objective attitude towards shechita and Jews. This attitude became evident in 1898, when the Danish cabinet submitted to the Danish parliament, Rigsdagen, a proposal for a law on the slaughtering and transportation of animals. As mentioned above, the animal protection movement had played a key role in taking the initiative on the slaughter bill; however, the proposal itself contained a paragraph exempting both the Danish-American method and shechita from the general requirement of previous stunning.³⁸⁰ When the bill was discussed in Folketinget, the lower chamber of Rigsdagen, the minister of agriculture stated that he believed the exemption of shechita probably would cause protests from the animal protection movement. Commenting on the debate, *Dyrevennen* refuted the minister’s claim, and made clear that his suggestion

³⁷⁶ *Dyrevennen* 1911, No. 9–10, p. 119; 1913, No. 5, p. 80; and 1913, No. 9, p. 136.

³⁷⁷ *Dyrevennen* 1887, No. 11, p. 87; 1892, No. 2, p. 13; 1893, No. 9–10, p. 66; 1903, No. 4–5, p. 51; 1913, No. 5, p. 80; and 1915, No. 7, p. 145.

³⁷⁸ *Dyrevennen* 1894, No. 1, p. 2.

³⁷⁹ *Dyrevennen* 1893, No. 9–10, p. 68.

³⁸⁰ The proposal was published in its entirety in *Dyrevennen* 1898, No. 12, p. 90.

was certainly *not* in accordance the movement's official stance.³⁸¹ On the contrary, *Dyrevennen* had made several positive assessments of shechita in previous issues, and had demonstrated a deep respect for the Jews' right to maintain their religious traditions, according to the editor:

For Jews, kosher butchering is a religious act with the strictest and most meticulous regulations, for instance regarding the state of the knife, its sharpness, its use exclusively for cutting the throat, and the manner in which the cut is made, etc.

The editor also explained that 'the association has always claimed, and will continue to support the notion, that one should not hurt the religious feelings of believers of other religions, and consequently will not insist on a prohibition of kosher slaughter.'³⁸²

In the following years, whenever the issue came up, the journal would continue to justify kosher slaughtering, citing its religious character. The reactions on the Finnish prohibition were, for instance, quite different in Denmark from those in Norway. A commentary to the same speech held in 1910 by the Finnish animal protectionist Agnes von Konow (quoted above), concluded with a defence of shechita, based on the right of religious freedom embodied in the Danish Constitution:

The crucial aspect for us, however, is that Jews have been given the freedom of religious practice [Religionsøvelse] through the Constitution, and as they claim that kosher slaughtering constitutes an important part of their Rite (of this may only the Jews judge themselves), one can not suddenly withdraw their permission.³⁸³

Noteworthy is that *Dyrevennen* retained its tolerant attitude towards shechita even after its founder and leading figure in the movement, Jacob Chr. Lembcke, had resigned as editor (1903) and was dead (1907). The subsequent editors followed Lembcke's line on this question, which suggests a broad consensus among the movement's leading figures with regard to shechita.³⁸⁴ Even when a veterinary member wrote a piece in *Dyrevennen* in 1913, in which he condemned shechita together with the Danish-American method,³⁸⁵ the editor sided with Rabbi David Simonsen, who in a reply to the veterinary had objected to his

³⁸¹ *Dyrevennen* 1899, No. 1, p. 5.

³⁸² *Dyrevennen* 1898, No. 10–11, p. 76.

³⁸³ *Dyrevennen* 1911, No. 9–10, p. 119.

³⁸⁴ Lembcke was followed as editor in 1903 by the Swede John Ambrosius Rothstein, who descended from a Scanian family of clergymen, and was himself an army officer by profession. In 1911 another military man followed Rothstein for a short period (S. Chr. Møller), before the teacher Jens Thamdrup edited the journal 1912–1925 (see Thamdrup & Degen 1925, p. 82).

³⁸⁵ *Dyrevennen* 1913, No. 5, p. 81.

claims.³⁸⁶ After having allowed some discussion between the veterinary and the rabbi, the editor concluded the debate by stating that ‘the implementation of the most humane slaughtering of animals should of course under no circumstances lead to the violation of certain individuals’ religious freedom’.³⁸⁷

When shechita was defended on the basis of its religious character, it had clearly not the same negative connotations as it had among Norwegian animal protectionists. The entire dichotomy between the ‘ritual’ and the ‘humane’, ‘Jews’ and ‘us’ does not appear in *Dyrevennen* in the same manner as in Norway. Danish animal protectionists’ toleration of shechita must rather be understood in the context of a third slaughter method, the Danish-American. In this context, the Jewish method constituted an intermediate category between the ‘humane’ stunning methods and the ‘inhumane’ Danish-American method. In the period prior to the introduction of the stunning methods, the Jewish method was even regarded as the most superior slaughter method from a humane viewpoint. This notion is also evident in accounts from the period *after* stunning methods were introduced, where shechita was juxtaposed with stunning methods in the agitation against the Danish-American method. For instance, in an article reviewing some of the stunning devices available on the market in 1897, the blooddraining resulting from one of the recommended devices was described as ‘as good as any other slaughter method, even the Jewish method’.³⁸⁸

In a follow-up to the same article, it was emphasised that stunning equipment was not satisfactory in itself. Successful slaughtering also depended on qualified and professional butchers, and the movement wanted butchers to carry proof ‘that they are capable of what Jewish congregations demand from their ritual butchers’.³⁸⁹ Not only were Jewish butchers regarded as models for other butchers – the Jewish slaughter method itself was also pointed out as a model, especially the use of the knife. In an extensive article in the 1903 edition, discussing various slaughter methods, the article’s author recommended cutting the throat according to the Jewish method:

³⁸⁶ *Dyrevennen* 1913, No. 9, p. 135.

³⁸⁷ *Dyrevennen* 1913, No. 11, p. 170.

³⁸⁸ *Dyrevennen* 1897, No. 7–8, p. 52.

³⁸⁹ *Dyrevennen* 1897, No. 7–8, p. 52.

The cut is conducted with a large, broad, knife, sharpened with the utmost meticulousness. This care with regard to the knife is explicitly prescribed in the Jewish ritual, and is without doubt determined by humanitarian concerns. Here, Christian butchers have much to learn.³⁹⁰

The description of ‘this splendid instrument, kept in a lined box and carefully sharpened before every new slaughtering’, which was both ‘more practical and more humane’, certainly constitutes a contrast to the description of the ‘old Jew with the huge knife’ in Norwegian *Dyrevennen* only one year earlier (see above).

Conclusion

From these observations, one may conclude that in Denmark, shechita was not associated with traditional Nordic slaughtering customs in the same way as in Norway. Although folkloristic research on traditional slaughter in Scandinavia mostly is confined to Norway and Sweden, there is little reason to believe that circumstances were much different in Denmark. In Denmark, however, unlike Norway, traditional slaughter methods had existed for centuries side-by-side with the Jewish method, and among animal protectionists, the latter had been regarded as superior. With the emergence of stunning methods and the Danish-American method, shechita still maintained its position as humane, although not as preferable as methods including previous stunning.

Lack of any knowledge of the Jewish slaughter method made the Norwegian animal protection movement take a radically different stance to kosher slaughter. Shechita only became known in Norway through the immigration of Eastern European Jews in the 1890s, while the animal protection movement had worked to replace traditional slaughter methods with stunning methods since the 1870s. Despite – or maybe because of – the modest presence of shechita in Norway compared to Denmark, the Jewish slaughter method was to have a constitutive function in the transition from traditional slaughter methods to modern stunning methods. Due to its apparent resemblance, the Jewish method was attributed features from the traditional slaughtering customs, such as the prolonged bleeding. In the transition to ‘humane’ slaughter methods, it was more convenient to denounce ‘barbaric’ slaughter methods in other cultural spheres or religions, since the Norwegian animal protection movement often emphasised the innate compassion for animals among Protestant Scandinavians. The notions of Scandinavian superiority were only possible by maintaining a certain distance from the

³⁹⁰ *Dyrevennen* 1903, No. 4–5, p. 49.

‘other’ – in this case Jews, in other cases Southern European Catholics or other ‘foreigners’. This distance was constituted by the lack of any actual contact with Jews – in Kristiania at the turn of the century, there were less than a thousand Jews out of a population of 250,000. In addition to miniscule size of the Jewish population comes the social distance. Most Kristiania Jews belonged to the lower middle class or the working class, as opposed to the upper middle class animal protection movement.

A similar distance from Jews did not exist among Danish animal protectionists – not only did most of the Jewish population in Denmark belong to the same urbane middle-class bourgeoisie as most animal protectionists did – the Danish movement even had a number of Jewish members. Some of them were more prominent public figures, such as the chief rabbi of Denmark, David Simonsen, who even engaged in debates on shechita in *Dyrevennen*.³⁹¹ Familiarity with Jews, and even with Jewish slaughter practice, made similar use of negative images of kosher slaughtering unheard of, and any attempt to do this was promptly dismissed in *Dyrevennen*. According to Metcalf, a prohibition was never introduced in Denmark because this also would mean a prohibition of the Danish-American method. However, the Danish animal protection movement, highly critical of this method, still wanted shechita to be exempted in case previous stunning would be made mandatory and the Danish-American method prohibited. Thus, the wish for an exemption for shechita may be viewed as a consequence of the demand for a prohibition of the Danish-American method, which played a similar role in the rhetoric of the Danish movement as kosher butchering did in the Norwegian.

Lastly, the comparison between different paths chosen by the animal protection movement in Denmark with regard to shechita also contributes to shed light upon Ole Malm’s accusations against the Norwegian animal protection movement. The lack of any substantial agitation against shechita in Denmark may also have convinced Malm that Norwegian animal protectionists were motivated by anti-Semitism rather than real concern for animals. Although Malm may have been mistaken in 1900 and 1910, his accusations were almost prophetic. In the following years, the struggle between Malm and the animal protection movement on the question of allowing shechita at the new public slaughterhouse in Kristiania contributed to radicalise the animal protection movement in an explicitly anti-Semitic direction.

³⁹¹ Lembcke 1900, p. 125.

3.2: Slaughterhouse Reform and the 1913 Kristiania Prohibition

In 1913, the animal protection movement celebrated the ban on kosher slaughtering in the country's capital Kristiania as a first major victory in the struggle against the Jewish slaughter method.³⁹² Although the movement had been able to influence the city council to ban the Jewish slaughter method, it was not the anti-shechita campaign that had brought up the issue in the first place. The demand to ban shechita was brought up only in connection with the establishment of a public slaughterhouse in Kristiania, however, this ban had not been among the original intentions behind the establishment of the public slaughterhouse. The public slaughterhouse was primarily the result of an over two-decade-long struggle to improve hygiene and public health. The main proponents of the slaughterhouse reform in Kristiania had been public health authorities and veterinarians, who based their demand for establishing a public slaughterhouse on the notion that this was one of the most important measures in preventing the spread of contagious diseases in densely populated urban areas.

The concern for the slaughter animals had been used only as a secondary, or perhaps tertiary, argument for establishing a public slaughterhouse in Kristiania, and this concern appeared only relatively late in the process. The concern for animal welfare, however, was to be the main argument for not allowing the practice of shechita at the new public slaughterhouse when it opened in 1913. To the resentment of the veterinary authorities, who had wanted all slaughtering in the city, including shechita, to take place within the public slaughterhouse, the presidency [formannsskapet] of the city council chose in a meeting on February 12, 1913 to exclude shechita not only from the new slaughterhouse, but also from the entire city. Consequently, Kristiania's Jews were compelled to use a private butchery outside the city borders. Despite opposition from veterinary authorities to banning kosher slaughter from the city, the animal protection movement, with support from the peasant-movement newspaper *Landmandsposten*,³⁹³ had succeeded in establishing what politicians referred to as a 'strong public opinion' against shechita. This 'public opinion' was apparently able to convince elected members of the Kristiania City Council and its presidency to ban shechita from the city, against the recommendations of the responsible municipal and government officials.

³⁹² *Dyrenes Ven* No. 2, 1913, p. 11; *Dyrenes Ven* No. 3, 1913, p. 23; *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1913, p. 16.

³⁹³ *Landmandsposten* (literally 'The Farmer's Post') became the main organ of the Norwegian Peasant's Association (Norges Landmandsforbund) when Thorvald Aadahl took over as editor in 1913.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain why establishing a public slaughterhouse led to the prohibition of shechita in the city proper. The importance of the decision to ban shechita from the capital cannot be underestimated, since it would later give rise to the possibility of prohibiting shechita nationally. However, more importantly, the debates from 1910 to 1913 also involved a semantic shift in the slaughterhouse reform discourse from being centred on hygiene and public health to increasingly focusing on the professionalisation of the butcher profession and concerns over animal welfare. With this discursive shift, the presence of the Jewish slaughter method at a municipal facility became unthinkable. Still, veterinary authorities continued to oppose the exclusion of shechita, and when the issue was raised again a year later in a courtroom in the neighbouring municipality of Aker, the ‘public opinion’ of animal protectionists and agrarian activists was overcome by the expert opinion of veterinarians (see next chapter). In this sense, ‘lay opinions’ were still regarded as secondary in the courtroom, while in the purely political debate, the animal protection movement had gained discursive hegemony at the expense of scientific expertise. Thus, events in 1913 would later make it possible to bring the issue into the national legislature.

Undoubtedly, the animal protection movement was able to direct much negative attention to the Jewish slaughter method, and its alliance with the peasant movement may also contribute to explain the success of their campaign against shechita in 1913. However, given the relatively modest number of letters and articles in newspapers, the sudden compliance of Kristiania’s elected politicians is striking. In addition to ‘public opinion’, there was also a growing opinion against the Jewish slaughter method among butchers during the slaughterhouse reform’s realisation. The explanation for their growing opposition may be found in the logic behind the slaughterhouse reform itself: As the need for slaughterhouses was partly grounded in the idea of removing unpleasant sights of slaughtering from city centres, the ban on shechita may be regarded as an expression of the same need to remove something perceived as an unpleasant reminder of traditional slaughter customs. Simultaneously, the butcher profession was being transformed in connection with the establishment of the public slaughterhouse in Kristiania, as everywhere else centralised slaughterhouses were established. This transformation had been termed a ‘dissociation of slaughtering and butchering’ by the French anthropologist Noëlie Vialles, and her theories

will be central in explaining the butchers' changing attitudes towards shechita.³⁹⁴ Summed up, the need to exclude shechita from the public slaughterhouse may be regarded, at least indirectly, as a consequence of the idea of slaughterhouse reform itself, although not intended by the original proponents of the reform in Norway.

This chapter begins with a brief account of slaughterhouse reforms that occurred in Europe during the 19th century, and of how these reforms were related to discourses on city planning, infrastructure, economics and hygiene. The chapter will also address the establishment of the public slaughterhouse in Kristiania and relate this to the modernisation of public health and the veterinary authorities' struggle against the spread contagious diseases from animals to humans. Then, the chapter follows the political process that led to the exclusion of shechita in Kristiania, before the public debates on the issue are examined in order to identify what was referred to by politicians and bureaucrats as the 'strong public opinion' against kosher slaughtering, and which eventually triumphed over scientific considerations.

19th-Century Slaughterhouse Reforms in Europe

Large, centralised public slaughterhouses (or abattoirs) were established in most larger European cities during the 19th century to replace smaller, privately owned butcheries and slaughterhouses. Previously, livestock had been brought from the countryside to small private butcheries in cities, where they were killed and dismembered by butchers in their shops or marketplace stalls. More often than not, the killing and the entire processing of carcasses, as well as the sale of the meat, were conducted on the same site. The establishment of public slaughterhouses was usually accompanied by legislation that forbade butchers to slaughter any other places within the city or municipality. The first centralised slaughterhouses in Europe were opened in Paris in 1818, after an initiative by Napoleon eight years earlier. The first measure of the Napoleonic slaughterhouse reforms was to relocate all slaughtering from the city centre to the city's periphery. The second measure was to build centralised slaughterhouses, separated from the public by high walls. The suppression of private butcheries and the subsequent establishment of five public slaughterhouses have been viewed as an attempt by Napoleon to regularise the unrestricted sale of meat that had arisen in the wake of the Revolution, when the privileges of the butchers' guild had been abolished.³⁹⁵ But it was primarily a response to citizens' complaints about smell, dirt and the traffic of animals

³⁹⁴ Vialles 1994, p. 17.

³⁹⁵ Watts 2008, p. 26.

through the city. Such complaints had existed since the late medieval period, and the presence of slaughtering in the midst of urban centres became increasingly unpopular throughout the 18th century as the butcheries even were thought to produce intoxicating miasmas.³⁹⁶

As a result of an unprecedented urbanisation during the 19th century, several other European cities had copied the French model by mid century.³⁹⁷ Authorities wanted to remove the highly visible slaughter of animals from city-centre streets to the peripheries where the slaughter did not annoy citizens, where adequate space existed, and where transportation of livestock through city streets was avoided. The new facilities were usually located close to train lines, thus allowing animals to arrive from remote provinces or even foreign countries. Another consequence of urbanisation, together with the widespread belief that consuming meat would benefit the working class, was that demand for meat rose exponentially. For these reasons, the five Parisian slaughterhouses were in 1867 centralised in the new facility of La Villette on Paris's north-eastern periphery. Although it was regarded a modern facility when opened, the La Villette slaughterhouse was no more than a continuation of Napoleonic slaughterhouses, which mainly had been build out of economic and infrastructural concerns. The sanitary and hygienic conditions differed little from those of the pre-revolutionary *tueries* and *boucheries* located near Châtelet in the centre of Paris since Roman times, and where slaughter methods largely had remained unchanged.³⁹⁸

A few decades later, a new wave of slaughterhouse reform commenced, which main goal was to improve sanitary conditions. These concerns motivated the establishment of the *Centralvieh- und Schlachthof* in Berlin in 1881, which was to serve as an example for a new type of slaughterhouses. After Rudolf Virchow and other pathologists in the 1860s had proven that trichina parasites spread from pork to humans, Virchow, when a member of the Berlin City Council, had been able to convince city authorities of the need to establish a centralised slaughterhouse where meat could be inspected for trichina and other meat-related diseases. However, before the new facility could be built, authorities had to await legislation enabling forced closure of private slaughterhouses and butcheries, thus making butchers use the new facility. After the Prussian Upper House adopted the *Schlachtzwanggesetz* in 1868, municipalities now had the legal authority to establish public slaughterhouses having a

³⁹⁶ Lee 2008b, p. 51.

³⁹⁷ Brantz (2008, pp. 71–72) mentions Rouen (1830), Marseille (1848), Lyon (1850), Brussels (1840), Vienna (1851), Milan (1863), Zurich (1868), Frankfurt (1861), Munich (1865), and Hamburg (1872).

³⁹⁸ Claflin 2008.

monopoly on slaughtering. It was, however, not until 1876 that the Berlin City Council found the opportunity to apply the new law and to approve the erection of a public slaughterhouse in the largely uninhabited Lichtenberg district, close to the Ringbahn on the city's north-eastern periphery.³⁹⁹ In the new slaughterhouse, both living animals and carcasses were subjected to strict control by veterinary inspectors,⁴⁰⁰ and Dorothee Brantz concludes that 'Calls for the closer inspection of meat had been one of the primary motivations behind the reform of slaughterhouses in Berlin'.⁴⁰¹

Based on these two prototypes of public slaughterhouses, one may conclude that there were two main rationales for 19th century slaughterhouse reform: the demand to remove visible slaughter from city centres, exemplified by the initial Napoleonic reforms and later by the parisian slaughterhouse of La Villette, and secondly the demand for meat inspection and improved sanitary conditions, exemplified by the Centralvieh- und Schlachthof in Berlin.

The Slaughterhouse as a Heterotopic Place

The demand for removing visible slaughter from city centres in earlier centuries may be regarded as part of the civilising process, as it was formulated by Norbert Elias. Although Elias does not address slaughtering specifically, he remarks that with the changing sensibilities from medieval to modern times, whole dead animals disappeared from the upper class's tables, where carcasses previously had been displayed at the beginning of meals, later to be carved by the head of the household or a guest of honour. Already in the middle of the 17th century, the sight of carcasses at tables was not recommended for 'des gens si délicats', as Elias quotes from a French manual of etiquette.⁴⁰² Not only from private households did whole dead animals disappear during the civilising process. There had been complaints about noise, stench, livestock traffic and the unpleasant sight of animal slaughter in European towns since late medieval times. In Thomas More's *Utopia*, livestock slaughter was conducted at 'special places outside the town' where 'the slaughtering of livestock and cleaning of carcasses is done by slaves'.⁴⁰³ As cities expanded during the Industrial Revolution, it became impossible to maintain slaughtering in densely populated urban centres. Centralisation secured meat supplies while also hiding from the public the process wherein living animals

³⁹⁹ Next to the current S-Bahn station Storkower Straße.

⁴⁰⁰ Brantz 2008.

⁴⁰¹ Brantz 2008, p. 83.

⁴⁰² Elias 1997, vol. 1, p. 253.

⁴⁰³ More 1516, quoted in Vialles 1994, p. 1.

were transformed into meat. Thus, scholars who have studied the slaughterhouse reforms regard the modern slaughterhouse a ‘heterotopic’ place in Michel Foucault’s terminology, or ‘a place that is a no-place’, to quote the anthropologist Noëlie Vialles.⁴⁰⁴ The animal studies scholar and historian Paula Young Lee argues that the slaughterhouse is a ‘type of heterotopia that replaces the messiness of everyday life with a clean, futureless arrangement’.⁴⁰⁵

Another important feature of new slaughterhouses was the facilities’ factory-like outline. Whereas all the stages of the butchering process previously had occurred in one room, the slaughterhouse had designated areas for each process necessary for making animals into meat: stunning (this was usually practiced only on cattle and horses for reasons of practicalities), neck incision and blooddraining, flaying, removal of offal and splitting of the carcasses. This segmentation of the process also had consequences for how the slaughter animals and the butcher profession were to be perceived. As Lee writes, ‘In order to become “modern”, the slaughterhouse had to become a factory system, casting cows and sheep not as animals but as meat waiting to be harvested’.⁴⁰⁶

One of the most enlightening analyses of the changes that occurred with the slaughterhouse reforms can be found in the French anthropologist Noëlie Vialles’ study of the abattoirs of the Ardour region in southern France. Even though her study is based on fieldwork conducted in the 1980s, it also has a historical dimension, and may be read as a theory of the transition from traditional craftsman butchery to modern industrial, mechanised slaughterhouses. One important change Vialles identified was replacement of traditional killing methods by stunning methods. With the traditional methods – as with shechita – there is no doubt that it is the *butcher* who kills the animal. The introduction of stunning methods did not only mean that animals were unconscious before their necks were cut and their blood drained. Since most of the stunning methods inflicted permanent, usually mortal damage to the animal’s brain, it also became unclear *when* the animal was killed. In addition, the stunning and blooddraining were often each conducted by different persons, which also made it unclear *who* killed the animal. Was the animal killed by the stunning, or by the cut for blooddraining? Vialles’ study shows that since it was impossible to decide which operation actually killed the animal, neither of

⁴⁰⁴ Foucault 1984 and Vialles 1996.

⁴⁰⁵ Lee 2008a, p. 6.

⁴⁰⁶ Lee 2008b, p. 62.

the two operations was regarded as killing. Thus, at a modern slaughterhouse, animals are no longer killed by a single butcher, but death occurs as a result of a process where usually several workers participate, aided by mechanical devices.⁴⁰⁷

Closely related to this change is another important shift that occurred with the appearance of modern slaughterhouses, termed by Vialles as the ‘dissociation of slaughtering and butchery’: ‘the prohibition of private slaughtering coupled with the obligation to have slaughtering performed in municipal establishments built far from urban centres [...] “cleared” the butcher and made him “innocent”’.⁴⁰⁸ When slaughtering with all its noise, filth and smell disappeared from the city centres into the sterile slaughterhouses, the butcher profession also changed radically. The butcher went from being a craftsman and part of a city’s artisan community to being a worker at a factory-like suburban facility. This did of course not necessarily mean that all butchers started to work in public slaughterhouses – many butchers maintained their butcher shops in cities and continued as meat sellers, while manual workers increasingly took care of slaughtering at the slaughterhouse. It was rather the profession dealing with the killing and slaughtering of livestock that changed from employing artisans to employing anonymous workers, and the urban butcher shop went from being a place of blood and killing to being ‘a place of innocence’.⁴⁰⁹

New discoveries in the fields of medicine and bacteriology gave impetus to meat control and improved sanitary and hygienic conditions, and the slaughterhouses were considered an important measure in the general improvement of public health. About Berlin’s slaughterhouses, Dorothee Brantz writes that:

the discovery of trichinosis not only served as a justification for the building of public abattoirs but also was used to legitimate the social and political authority of medicine over the physical health of bodies. The reform of slaughterhouses in Berlin exposed the growing amalgamation of scientific discourses and state power in the name of public welfare.⁴¹⁰

With this second stage in the development of the modern slaughterhouse, slaughterhouses also became more standardised and mechanised. Separate zones were dedicated to the different parts of the process, and the separation of ‘dirty’ and ‘clean’ areas was accentuated. Although

⁴⁰⁷ Vialles 1994, p. 45.

⁴⁰⁸ Vialles 1994, p. 17.

⁴⁰⁹ Vialles 1994, p. 6.

⁴¹⁰ Brantz 2008, p. 85.

these measures were primarily hygienic, Vialles has pointed out that the cultural aspects of these changes should not be forgotten. With a standardised plan for the facilities, white tiled walls, concrete floor and with segmentation of the slaughtering operation, Vialles observes that a process of aesthetisation occurred. This aesthetisation in all parts of the slaughterhouse is what finally makes the meat acceptable as human food in the modern world.⁴¹¹ Finally, the improved conditions of the animals are regarded by the authors quoted merely as a side effect of the slaughterhouse reforms, and more a consequence of the two former motivations than a reason in itself. As Paula Young Lee concludes in the introduction to an anthology she edited on the history of Western public slaughterhouses:

And it was still the rhetoric of technological progress (improved hygiene, faster processing, and the architectural alleviation of animal distress) rather than arguments in favour of animal rights, that tends to dominate public discourse on the subject.⁴¹²

The Establishment of a Public Slaughterhouse in Kristiania

Along with concern about unsatisfactory sanitary conditions at private butcheries, and concern about the surroundings, concern about the treatment of the slaughter animals has been regarded a decisive factor for the Kristiania City Council's decision in 1910 to construct a public slaughterhouse in Kristiania.⁴¹³ However, the Norwegian slaughterhouse law of 1892 had solely been aimed at improving the sanitary aspects of slaughtering, and not the conditions for livestock. Neither the law itself, nor the proposals and the expert opinions the law was based on, addressed animal welfare. The sole motivation behind the law was that centralised slaughterhouses would benefit the fight against contagious animal diseases.⁴¹⁴

Although slaughterhouse reforms in Norway occurred at a later stage and were condensed into a much shorter time than in most countries on the European continent, the development of the Norwegian reforms and the intentions behind them resemble the general development on the Continent. By the turn of the century, sanitary conditions at private slaughterhouses and butcheries by no means differed in Norway from what was found elsewhere in Europe some decades earlier. Regarding treatment of the animals, only larger livestock were usually

⁴¹¹ Vialles 1994, pp. 61–66.

⁴¹² Lee 2008a, p. 7. Vialles (1994, p. 17) also seems to agree on this.

⁴¹³ Bergqvist 2010, p. 54.

⁴¹⁴ 'Oth. Prp. No. 22 (1892). Ang. Udfærdigelse af Lov om kommunale Slagtehuse, Kjødkontrol m. v.' in *Storthingsforhandlinger 1892. Tredie Del. Propositioner og Meddelelser*. Kristiania 1892; 'Indst. O. No. 50. Indstilling fra næringskomiteen No. 2 angaaende det kongelig forslag til lov om komunale slagtehuse, kjødkontrol m. v.' in *Storthingsforhandlinger 1892. Indstillinger og Beslutninger. B*. Kristiania 1892.

stunned (by a stroke on the animal's forehead), and traditional slaughter methods were associated with a number of symbolic practices and superstitious beliefs, as will be recalled from the previous chapter. A significant difference from continental Europe, however, was that in Norway, a large number of animals were killed and slaughtered by farmers or local butchers travelling from farm to farm. Still, there were about 30 private butcheries in Kristiania in 1890, most of which were characterised in contemporary reports as 'small, narrow, insufficiently ventilated', where the environments 'could not possibly be worse than they are'.⁴¹⁵

On the background of the poor conditions in butcheries in Kristiania and other cities, the government took in the early 1890s the initiative to establish legislation that would ensure better sanitary conditions for slaughtering. By legislating obligatory use of public slaughterhouses where such conditions were established, the government ultimately wanted to improve public health. The bill's draft was penned by the head of the civilian Veterinary Authority, Ole Malm, and it is evident from the proposal that his main concern was the fight against tuberculosis and other diseases transmitted from animals to humans. Some years earlier, Malm had been a student at the Institute Pasteur in Paris, and had been one of the pioneers in the struggle against tuberculosis and other contagious diseases in Norway. Already in 1894, Malm had started producing serum for treating diphtheria at the government's laboratory of veterinary pathology (later the Veterinary Institute), which had been established on his initiative in conjunction with the Veterinary Office of the Ministry of the Interior.⁴¹⁶ As in Germany, the Norwegian law on municipal slaughterhouses from 1892 opened for establishing centralised slaughterhouses where all slaughtering within the municipality in question would have to occur. By 1910, such public slaughterhouses had already been erected in Stavanger, Kristiansund and Lillehammer, while the authorities of the capital had been planning a similar slaughterhouse since the year the slaughterhouse law was adopted; however, the plans being unrealised until 1910.

It was only relatively late in the planning of the Kristiania slaughterhouse that animal welfare became an argument for establishing a public slaughterhouse. In the final proposal of the preparatory slaughterhouse committee to the city council in 1910, concern for slaughter

⁴¹⁵ Bergqvist 2010, p. 54.

⁴¹⁶ Larsen 2005, p. 32.

animals is mentioned only in very general terms in one sentence.⁴¹⁷ The remainder of the proposal is dedicated to the sanitary aspects of the case: ‘The efforts that have been aimed to gather all slaughter activities in the city into one centralised facility have been dictated by sanitary concerns’, the proposal concluded.⁴¹⁸ Not even the municipal veterinary mentioned concern for slaughter animals in his hearing statement; neither did the city’s health commission.⁴¹⁹ The city magistrate’s⁴²⁰ final proposal to the presidency of the city council listed the reasons for constructing a public slaughterhouse in the following priority:

The emphasis is first of all placed on the sanitary concerns [...]. Secondly, one must emphasise that the increased amount of slaughtering within the city will lead to a greater access to the cheaper, though still nutritious parts of the meat [...]. Lastly, it is in the interest of the animals themselves that the killing may take place without unnecessary torments.⁴²¹

The proposal also contained a clause that at first glance may be interpreted as expressing concern for the animals, stating that ‘the killing of cattle and horses should be provided by the slaughterhouse by shooting, without any additional fees’.⁴²² However, since only the largest animals are specified, this must rather be understood as a practical measure. In most modern slaughterhouses, stunning or killing of larger livestock by shooting or stunning devices was applied long before the demands of animal protectionists were given any attention. Stunning was usually done to gain better control of the animals, to ease the job and to provide safety for the butcher.⁴²³ Thus, there is little to suggest that city authorities placed slaughter animals’ welfare particularly high when the proposal to construct a public slaughterhouse was submitted to the city council in 1910. Rather, the process seems to follow the common pattern known from other European cities: concern for the surroundings, and not least, improvement of public health.

⁴¹⁷ Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker*, 1910, vol. 1b (Documents), case No. 141, p. 4.

⁴¹⁸ Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker*, 1910, vol. 1b (Documents), case No. 141, p. 2.

⁴¹⁹ Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker*, 1910, vol. 1b (Documents), case No. 141, p. 3.

⁴²⁰ Until 1922, the magistrates functioned in Norway as the main administrative body of a city, and were composed of officials appointed by the government in order to secure stability and predictability in city governance (Kjeldstadli 1990, p. 277). As opposed to English-speaking countries, the term did not signify a judicial office. The Kristiania Magistrate was divided into three departments, where the second department was responsible for the slaughterhouse issue, among many other things. With a normal decision process, the magistrate would present its recommendation with the proposals of preparatory committees (in this case the slaughterhouse committee) and other governing bodies (such as the finance committee) to the presidency, which ultimately would bring the proposal to the plenary meeting of the city council.

⁴²¹ Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker*, 1910, vol. 1b (Documents), case No. 141, p. 26.

⁴²² Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker*, 1910, vol. 1b (Documents), case No. 141, p. 13.

⁴²³ Vialles 1994, p. 17.

Proceedings of the City Council

The proposal of the preparatory slaughterhouse committee, with the recommendation of the magistrate, was adopted by the presidency of Kristiania City Council on December 1, 1910, which then submitted to the city council a proposal for establishing a slaughterhouse in the Grønland district.⁴²⁴ The new facility was to be located in a corner between the railway lines leading to the East Station [Østbanestasjonen], the city's largest railway station, and the Aker River.⁴²⁵ Although relatively close to the city centre compared to most other modern urban slaughterhouses, the Kristiania slaughterhouse was thus situated in an area separated from the city centre by the railway on one side and the river on the other.

The city council took up the slaughterhouse proposal for debate on December 12, 1910. The debate concerned mainly two issues – the question of whether the city should buy one of the neighbouring buildings for administrative purposes, and whether the slaughterhouse committee had intended to exclude the Jewish community from using the slaughterhouse. The head of the Veterinary Authority, Ole Malm, as member of the city council for the Conservative-Liberal electoral list,⁴²⁶ feared that the clause in the proposal specifying killing by shooting for larger animals was in fact an expression of a 'tendency of a quite severe range'. The clause, stating that 'the killing of cattle and horses should be provided by the slaughterhouse by shooting, without any additional fees',⁴²⁷ 'would conflict with the religious question which slaughtering constitutes for the Jews, and which is of utmost importance for them', according to Malm.⁴²⁸ As will be recalled, Malm had already in 1900 claimed that kosher slaughter, when conducted correctly, could not be regarded more cruel than the stunning methods developed in the late 19th century.

Even though the clause about shooting most likely had been added out of practical concerns rather than any intention of excluding Jews from the slaughterhouse – or out of the concern for the animals, for that matter – this issue was to overshadow most other aspects during the city council debate. Malm was defied by Thora Lund, a substitute representative of the council

⁴²⁴ Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker*, 1910, vol. 1b (Documents), case No. 141, p. 29.

⁴²⁵ Where the present Galleri Oslo commercial complex and Oslo Bus Terminal are located.

⁴²⁶ The electoral list was composed of members of the Conservative Party [Høire], the Liberal Electoral Society [Den liberale velgerforening] (not to be confused with the Liberal Party [Venstre]), and the Business Party [Næringspartiet]. Malm was a member and former leader (1905–1908) of the Kristiania Liberal Electoral Society, which previously had been associated with the Coalition Party [Samlingspartiet] and later the Liberal Left Party [Frisinnede Venstre].

⁴²⁷ Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker*, 1910, vol. 1b (Documents), case No. 141, p. 13.

⁴²⁸ Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker*, 1910, vol. 3 (Minutes), case No. 141, p. 468.

for the Conservative-Liberal list, and a prominent member of the Women's Animal Protection Association. With reference to the prohibitions on kosher slaughter in Finland, Switzerland and Saxony,⁴²⁹ Lund stated that she desired regulations where previous stunning by shooting was compulsory, and thus to 'banish it [kosher slaughtering] from our city'.⁴³⁰ In his response, Malm now claimed to have had his suspicions confirmed, and stated that 'One cannot use a laudable and good cause such as the prevention of animal cruelty to promote interests in which a tendency of a quite different character than the ethical ones is lurking behind'. Malm elaborated what he meant was lurking behind: 'It is not the animals one seeks to protect, but to persecute the Jews', and referred to the anti-Semitic agitation that had caused the prohibition in Saxony.⁴³¹ Malm completely dismissed the arguments of the animal protectionists by stating that: 'I have observed it [i. e. kosher slaughter] many times, but I can assure you that when shooting has been applied, the result I have observed has been far more unpleasant than by the Jewish *Schächtning*'.⁴³² Apart from a supportive statement in favour of Malm from the Labour representative Carl Jeppesen on the basis of Malm's expertise as veterinary,⁴³³ the session lapsed into debating other issues.

The city council unanimously adopted the slaughterhouse committee's proposal, however, leaving unrelolved the question of slaughter methods raised by Malm. Thus, it would be up to the presidency to decide on this matter since developing detailed regulations of the slaughterhouses had been delegated to this body. The proposal also included an agreement with all private butcheries in Kristiania on voluntary closure in exchange for financial compensation, and the option of forced closure embedded in the slaughterhouse law of 1892 was not used.⁴³⁴ However, the presidency made establishing new private butcheries inside the city impossible when regulations for the public slaughterhouse were approved two years later, shortly before the newly erected slaughterhouse's opening. The section regarding the slaughter halls, approved on January 28, 1913, stated in its first paragraph: 'All slaughtering

⁴²⁹ The Swiss prohibition dated from 1893, while the Saxon and Finnish prohibitions were lifted the same year and in 1912, respectively.

⁴³⁰ Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker*, 1910, vol. 3 (Minutes), case No. 141, pp. 468–469. Johs. Dahl, a member of the slaughterhouse committee and the city council for the Labour Party, sympathised with Lund, but meant that such questions should be left to the new slaughterhouse's administration.

⁴³¹ Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker*, 1910, vol. 3 (Minutes), case No. 141, p. 476.

⁴³² Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker*, 1910, vol. 3 (Minutes), case No. 141, p. 477.

⁴³³ Carl Jeppesen (1858–1930), the influential editor of the newspaper *Social-Demokraten* and former leader of the Labour Party, happened also to be a member of the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania (see lists of members in *Dyrenes Ven* 1898, p. 45 and *Tillæg til Dyrenes Ven April 1913*, 1913, p. 2).

⁴³⁴ Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker*, 1910, vol. 3 (Minutes), case No. 141, p. 484.

of cattle, calves, horses, sheep, goats and pigs within the city shall take place at Kristiania slaughterhouse'. The presidency, well aware of the risk of banning shechita from the slaughterhouse by specifying the killing methods, chose to impose even more limited slaughter methods than formulated in the magistrate's proposal to the city council two years earlier. Instead of restricting the use of stunning to larger animals, the regulations stated that 'No animal must be slaughtered without previous stunning by a blow on the forehead or shooting'.⁴³⁵ Malm seemingly had his allegations of anti-Semitism confirmed, but to take Malm's suspicions for granted, would in this case be too simplistic. What had happened in the meantime? And even if Malm was right – what had made city authorities turn against the Jewish community? Why would city authorities wish to ban the Jewish slaughter method?

The Exclusion of the Jewish Community from the Public Slaughterhouse

Irrespective of the two paragraphs' alleged tendency, combining them to thereby limit slaughtering to the public slaughterhouse and to make stunning obligatory, meant that the Jewish method of religious slaughter would be impossible to practice within the city after the slaughterhouse regulations came into force in February 1913. Well aware of that possibility, the Mosaic Congregation had already in October 1912 asked the magistrate for permission to use the slaughterhouse for their 'ritual slaughter'.⁴³⁶ The magistrate reacted by obtaining statements from the city council's permanent marketplace committee, the ad hoc slaughterhouse committee,⁴³⁷ as well as the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania and finally the director of the government's veterinary authority, Ole Malm. Both the Animal Protection Association and a majority in the two committees discouraged the authorisation of kosher slaughter in the new slaughterhouse,⁴³⁸ while Malm had no objections.⁴³⁹ Another

⁴³⁵ Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker* 1912–1913, Document No. 42, 'Forskrifter for Kristiania Slagtehus', p. 35.

⁴³⁶ Letter from the Mosaic Congregation's trustee Axel Grün, dated 21.10.1912, rendered in the mail journal of the Magistrate's II. Dept. (15.08.1911–01.03.1913) as case No. 2864/1912 (Oslo City Archives).

⁴³⁷ Members of the slaughterhouse committee were Axel Pettersen (chairman, Cons.-Lib. Electoral List), G. Christiansen (Cons.-Lib. Electoral List), Johs. Dahl (Labour Party), Sverre Iversen (Labour Party), Heiberg (Cons.-Lib. Electoral List), Karlsen (Cons.-Lib. Electoral List), and Redvald Larssen (Liberal Party). Larssen, a police officer, was a close colleague and friend of Johan Søhr, the police officer and animal protectionist that later would play a crucial role in the struggle against kosher slaughter in the 1920s. On the relationship between Larssen and Søhr, see Larssen 1946.

⁴³⁸ The board of the association had reached the somewhat peculiar conclusion that kosher butchering 'should not be denied definitively in the public slaughterhouse, but kosher slaughtering should definitively be prohibited'. This should probably be interpreted as if the association meant that there rather should have been a national prohibition (Victor Nielsen-Sæther: 'Schächtning' paa byens slagtehus' in *Aftenposten* 31.12.1912).

⁴³⁹ Letter from Malm, dated 10.01.1913 (The National Archives, The Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret, Saksarkiv: No. 100, Lov om avlivning av husdyr og tamrein. Forarbeider til lov. Spes. Schächtning 1912–1925) and letter from the marketplace committee, dated 01.02.1913, with the statement of the slaughterhouse

veterinary, the newly appointed manager of the yet to be opened slaughterhouse, Amund Lo,⁴⁴⁰ had been asked by the marketplace committee about his opinion. The manager had certain qualms, but found that kosher slaughter could indeed take place in the slaughterhouse before its regular opening hours.⁴⁴¹

Lo had already commented upon the Jewish slaughter method in an interview with *Aftenposten* almost six months earlier in his capacity as police veterinary. In this interview, when Lo was asked about his opinion on various forms of animal cruelty allegedly taking place in the city, he chose not to characterise kosher slaughter as animal cruelty, and claimed that death occurred relatively rapidly with this method too.⁴⁴² Thus, Lo seems to have shared Malm's opinions on shechita, which is also underpinned from later statements and initiatives from Lo. In an interview in *Aftenposten* on February 10, 1913, Lo had suggested that an exemption for the Jewish community to slaughter at a private butchery could be prolonged if the presidency would decide not to permit kosher slaughter at the new slaughterhouse.⁴⁴³ Lo even obtained support for this view from the board of the Norwegian Veterinarian's Association, which in a letter to Lo supported his views by stating that the practice of shechita, when performed by a skilled shochet, could not be regarded as animal cruelty.⁴⁴⁴

In accordance with Malm's and Lo's responses, the marketplace committee stated in its response to the magistrate that

kosher butchering cannot be regarded as animal cruelty, and it is difficult to find any genuine objections against giving the Jews permission to conduct their ritual slaughter in the public slaughterhouse of Kristiania.⁴⁴⁵

committee enclosed, rendered in the mail journal of the Magistrate's II. Dept. (15.08.1911–01.03.1913) as case No. 391/1913 (Oslo City Archives).

⁴⁴⁰ Amund Lo (1864–1941) had been a central figure in establishing the slaughterhouse, and served as its manager from 1912 until 1931. Although not engaged in the animal protection movement at this point, Lo would later become leader of the Animal Protection Association of Oslo (1933–1939).

⁴⁴¹ Letter from veterinary Lo to the marketplace committee, dated 28.11.1912, quoted in Victor Nielsen-Sæther: "‘Schächtning’ paa byens slagtehus" in *Aftenposten*, 31.12.1912. Lo was heavily criticised by the animal protection movement for this stance, and Nielsen-Sæther stated that he could not believe how a veterinary and a member of the association could 'adopt such a stance' and 'place himself in opposition to the association' (*Dyrenes Ven*, Jan. 1913, pp. 3–4).

⁴⁴² 'Politidyrslægen om dyrplageri' in *Aftenposten* 30.08.1912.

⁴⁴³ *Aftenposten*, 10.02.1913.

⁴⁴⁴ The National Archives, Landbruksdepartementet, Veterinærkontoret, Saksarkiv: Lov om avlivning av husdyr og tamrein. Forarbeider til lov. Spes. Schächting 1912–1925, letter from the board of the Norwegian Veterinarian's Association to Amund Lo, dated 28.01.1913.

⁴⁴⁵ The statement was quoted in *Aftenposten*, 13.02.1913.

Despite this assessment, the Conservative Party majority of the marketplace committee nevertheless recommended the magistrate not to allow kosher slaughter in the slaughterhouse, due to the ‘strong opinion’ against the Jewish method, which, if used, could damage the slaughterhouse’s reputation.⁴⁴⁶ The magistrate endorsed the conclusions of the majority in the two committees, stating that although the Jewish method could not be considered animal cruelty,

the financial state of the slaughterhouse would suffer from an authorisation of kosher slaughtering, since from several sources there has been raised a considerable opinion against the Jewish method of killing.⁴⁴⁷

On February 12, 1913, the city council’s presidency adopted the recommendations of the two committees and the magistrate. Kosher slaughter was thus outlawed not only as a perhaps unintended consequence of two separate paragraphs in the regulations of the slaughterhouse, but also with the explicit intention of the presidency.⁴⁴⁸ On this background, the magistrate demanded that the private butchery used by the Jewish community be closed, which until then apparently had been exempted (or at least tolerated) from the general rule of January 28 that made the use of the slaughterhouse mandatory for all butchers.⁴⁴⁹

The ‘Public Opinion’ – the Press and the Animal Protection Movement

Given the magistrate’s and presidency’s strong emphasis on public opinion in their respective reasoning for the ban on kosher slaughter in 1913, it would be highly relevant to look into the press debate concerning the issue. At this point, it was still mainly the animal protection movement that agitated against kosher slaughter, although now also in the major newspapers, not only in its own publications. Still, the number of articles in newspapers up to when the ban was adopted by the presidency on February 12 is relatively low. Thus, it may seem difficult to grasp how four letters to the editor and a few editorial articles in *Aftenposten* and two articles in the agrarian newspaper *Landmandsposten* could be regarded as a ‘strong’ or ‘considerable’ opinion, which supposedly forced the presidency to act against its own stance

⁴⁴⁶ ‘Den jødiske slagtning. Torudvalget: Det er ikke dyrplageri, men har en sterk opinion mod sig’ in *Aftenposten* 13.02.1913. The majority of the committee – Hans Halvorsen, Berg, and Mrs. Moestue, all Conservative representatives, had been ‘inclined to concur with the conclusions of the veterinary director’.

⁴⁴⁷ Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker* 1912–1913, vol. 1b, Negotiations of the Kristiania City Council, p. 145.

⁴⁴⁸ Oslo City Archives, *Aktstykker* 1912–1913, vol. 1b, Negotiations of the Kristiania City Council, p. 145. The members of the presidency present were the mayor, Hieronymus Heyerdahl of the Conservative Party, Carl Jeppesen, Christian Holtermann Knudsen, and Sverre Iversen of the Labour Party, Harald Aars, Hans Halvorsen, and Carl Berg of the Conservative Party, and A. Frisch of the Liberal Party.

⁴⁴⁹ Oslo City Archives, the Magistrate, II. Dept, outgoing mail 02.09.1912–14.03.1913, letter dated 19.02.1913 to butcher Gulbrandsen, Bodøgaten 11.

on the issue. However, one should have in mind that *Aftenposten* was Kristiania's and Norway's most widely read newspaper at the time,⁴⁵⁰ and that the animal protectionists, some of who held influential positions in society, also acted through other channels of influence. Thirdly, butchers also voiced their opinion through their semi-public professional journal, in addition to complaints submitted to the slaughterhouse manager.

The first objection in the press against kosher slaughter was raised by an anonymous 'animal friend' in *Aftenposten* on Christmas Eve 1912. The submitter had heard that the Mosaic Congregation had asked for permission to use the new slaughterhouse, and thus obtain 'the official stamp on their "kosher slaughter"',⁴⁵¹ according to the submitter's logic. Although condemning the 'most cruel anxiety' that the animals experience from the Jewish slaughter method, the anonymous submitter also sought to draw upon Ole Malm's expertise, by quoting from the 1900 article in which Malm had admitted that the Jewish method for an onlooker probably would be perceived as more unpleasant than the stunning methods. The submitter expressed his (or her) dissatisfaction with Malm's conclusion to continue allowing kosher slaughtering,⁴⁵² but nevertheless recommended Malm's article. In the submitter's opinion, every 'compassionate and educated person' would be 'deeply offended' by the Jewish slaughter method, and were the method to be allowed, it would 'provoke an entitled protest'.⁴⁵³

The emphasis on the ritual character of kosher slaughtering – which had been one of the main features in the animal protection movement's agitation since the turn of the century – was more pronounced in another anonymous letter, printed in *Aftenposten* on January 4, 1913. The submitter proposed that the 'ritual Jew-slaughter' [*sic*] should be demonstrated before the members of the presidency and the press in comparison with slaughter methods involving previous stunning. Thus, the members of the presidency would be able to 'see with their own eyes how this ceremonial killing was done'.⁴⁵⁴ In a similar vein, an editorial article in the peasant-movement newspaper *Landmandsposten* demanded changes in Norwegian legislation 'that would protect us against worship in the form of animal cruelty'.⁴⁵⁵ *Landmandsposten*

⁴⁵⁰ The conservative *Aftenposten* had been the leading newspaper in the capital since 1905 (Flo 2010, p. 25).

⁴⁵¹ 'En dyreven': 'En røst til det dyrebeskyttende publikum' in *Aftenposten* 24.12.1912. Emphasis in original.

⁴⁵² Malm had been opposed to denying the use of the Jewish slaughter method, as he considered it to be no crueller than the methods involving previous stunning (Malm 1900).

⁴⁵³ 'En dyreven': 'En røst til det dyrebeskyttende publikum' in *Aftenposten* 24.12.1912.

⁴⁵⁴ 'En tilskuer': 'Skal rituel jødeslagtning tillades paa Kristiania slagtehus' in *Aftenposten* 04.01.1913.

⁴⁵⁵ 'Dyrplageri' in *Landmandsposten* 06.01.1913.

was the official organ of the Norwegian Farmer's Organisation [Norsk Landmandsforbund], and the forerunner of the Peasant Party's official daily *Nationen*. In 1913, *Landmandsposten* was edited by Thorvald Aadahl (1882–1962), who later made *Nationen* a stronghold for anti-communism and anti-Semitism with explicit fascist and Nazi sympathies.⁴⁵⁶

Although the animal protection movement's official agitation was restrained in public and retained a level of fairness that later disappeared from the debate, the rhetoric intensified in the internal publications of the animal protection movement. Malm was repeatedly referred to as 'a fanatic defender of the Jews' "kosher slaughter" in *Dyrenes Ven*,⁴⁵⁷ and the journal went further in its condemnation of Jews than the association did publicly. In a special edition on kosher slaughter that was distributed to all members of the magistrate and the city council in January 1913, several articles and statements were cited that condemned kosher slaughter. For instance, *Dyrenes Ven* supported the conclusion of *Landmandsposten* that 'kosher slaughter relies on a stunted provision in the Jew's religion which demands that the animals be tortured to death'.⁴⁵⁸

However, in the newspapers, representatives of the animal protection movement appealed to the public's common sense without explicitly drawing upon fear and xenophobia.⁴⁵⁹ Shortly after the anonymous letter in *Aftenposten*, the leader of the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania, Victor Nielsen-Sæther, submitted a letter to *Aftenposten* in which he clarified the animal protection movement's official stance. Although more factual and sober than the writings in *Dyrenes Ven*, Nielsen-Sæther's piece criticised Jews for their adherence to ancient customs that not only had lost their practical functions, but that also were incompatible with modern circumstances. Nielsen-Sæther expressed sympathy with the Jewish people and respect for their religion, but meant that the method of slaughter prescribed by Jewish law could only be considered as 'a stain on their religious beliefs'. The method could surely have been regarded 'of humane nature' two or three thousand years ago, but times had changed, and now it was time for Jews to comply with the modern standards adopted 'in every civilised

⁴⁵⁶ Ottosen (ed.) 2010, p. 51; Simonsen 2009.

⁴⁵⁷ Georg Sverdrup: 'Slagtespørgsmaalet' in *Dyrenes Ven*, Dec. 1910, p. 90; Georg Sverdrup: 'Slagtespørgsmaalet' in *Dyrenes Ven*, March 1911, p. 18.

⁴⁵⁸ 'Dyrplageri' in *Landmandsposten* 06.01.1913.

⁴⁵⁹ The following letter by Victor Nielsen-Sæther and a letter written by Claudine Heiberg (*Aftenposten* 05.02.1913), a board member of the Women's Animal Protection Association, were the only signed letters in the public debate.

country’.⁴⁶⁰ At this point, prohibitions of kosher slaughter existed only in Switzerland and Finland – the kingdom of Saxony had lifted its 1892 prohibition a few years earlier in December 1910. Nielsen-Sæther could similarly not have been very familiar with the practice of shechita, as his description of kosher slaughter contained several inaccuracies. Nielsen-Sæther wrote, for instance, that animals were killed by *three* incisions on the neck, instead of a single one.

Excerpts of Nielsen-Sæther’s letter were also printed in *Landmandsposten*, just as *Dyrenes Ven* later would include excerpts from *Landmandsposten* on this matter. *Landmandsposten* quoted Nielsen-Sæther’s somewhat inaccurate description of shechita, together with a call to ‘eradicate such filth’.⁴⁶¹ This exchange of articles between the two publications was the beginning of an alliance that would dominate the future debate on kosher slaughter, but already in 1913, this alliance may be identified as the ‘public opinion’ which justified the demand for a prohibition in Kristiania and later in Aker. This was an alliance of two movements that were not always in agreement, but found themselves allied in their common objectives concerning the kosher slaughter issue. As one of the leading figures of the Women’s Animal Protection Association suggested in *Landmandsposten*: ‘the men of agriculture together with the animal protection movement could force this [a national prohibition] through, despite all opposition from the “experts”’.⁴⁶²

The Butchers and Shechita

The veterinary authorities’ willingness, including that of the slaughterhouse administration, to find a solution in cooperation with the Jewish community had perhaps made community representatives think that the magistrate and presidency might change their opinion in the future. The Kristiania presidency’s decision had not been fundamental, but rather pragmatic, and did not rule out a different outcome had it not been for the ‘strong opinion’ against the Jewish method. Moreover, in the neighbouring municipality of Aker, the Jewish community had been allowed to continue shechita, despite resistance from the animal protection movement and the Aker police (more on this in the next chapter). At any rate, in December 1914, about two years after the original request, the Mosaic Congregation directed a renewed request to the magistrate, asking for permission to use the public slaughterhouse for kosher

⁴⁶⁰ Victor Nielsen-Sæther: “‘Schächtning’ paa byens slagtehus’ in *Aftenposten* 31.12.1912.

⁴⁶¹ ‘Jødeslagtningen’ in *Landmandsposten* 24.01.1913.

⁴⁶² Julie Ihlen: ‘Jødeslagtningen’ in *Landmandsposten* 21.02.13.

slaughtering. The magistrate repeated the previous year's procedure, and requested statements on the matter from the administrative bodies concerned, however this time, only from the manager of the slaughterhouse and then from the marketplace committee.⁴⁶³ In a letter to the manager, the magistrate inquired whether it would be possible to cast the animals in a responsible manner without causing unnecessary pain, whether butchers would object to the presence of kosher slaughtering at the slaughterhouse, and finally the manager's own opinion on the matter.⁴⁶⁴

Before replying, manager Amund Lo obtained the opinions of the butchers, represented by the Kristiania Butchers' Association. The association replied to Lo in a letter in January 1915, stating that:

We cannot recommend that this slaughter method be introduced at the Kristiania public slaughterhouse, as we find this method of killing unappealing [mindre tiltalende]. Albeit the term 'animal cruelty' is not accurate according to the expert statements, we still find this slaughter method disgusting and gruesome to an extent that gives the impression of animal cruelty. [...] We also believe that it will arouse disapproval among citizens, and the farmer will hesitate to sell his animals and let them be killed at the Kristiania slaughterhouse if kosher slaughtering is introduced.⁴⁶⁵

The unambiguous rejection of the Jewish slaughter method is remarkable, not only since the butchers admitted that it could not be characterised as animal cruelty, but also because only a few years earlier, the butchers themselves had been negative towards the mandatory use of previous stunning at the slaughterhouse. Their opposition should be viewed in light of the prolonged use of non-stunning methods in Norway, and as in Bergen (see previous chapter), many of the butchers in Kristiania were probably using non-stunning methods up until the opening of the new public slaughterhouse. Although positive to the establishment of public slaughterhouses as such, the journal of the butcher profession had as late as 1911 expressed scepticism towards the animal protection movement's demand that livestock be stunned

⁴⁶³ The slaughterhouse manager had superseded the slaughterhouse committee as administrative body responsible for the slaughterhouse after the facility had been officially inaugurated. Although not requested to make any statement this time, the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania still submitted a protest to the Magistrate (dated 08.04.1915).

⁴⁶⁴ Oslo City Archives, the Magistrate's II. Dept, outgoing mail 19.08.1914–14.01.1915, letter dated 16.12.1914 to the manager of the slaughterhouse.

⁴⁶⁵ Archives of the Storting, Bilag til Stortinget 1927, Diverse II, copy of letter from Kristiania Slakterborgeres Forening to Amund Lo, dated 26.01.1915.

before slaughter, and the journal suggested that the problem was rather the use of unskilled labour.⁴⁶⁶

However, the negative attitudes towards stunning methods seem to have ceased after the slaughterhouse was opened. In the June and August 1914 editions of the butcher journal were several articles negative to kosher slaughter. An anonymous ‘elderly master butcher’ wrote to the journal that kosher slaughter was ‘not only animal cruelty, but also reprehensible and crude work, not suited for modern, civilised humans’.⁴⁶⁷ Manager Fritz Lütcherat of the Farmer’s Common Slaughterhouse [Bøndernes Fællesslagteri], a private facility in the neighbouring Aker municipality, stated in January 1913 to *Dyrenes Ven* that he would not permit kosher slaughter at his slaughterhouse because of the negative influence this would have on his butchers. In his opinion, kosher slaughter ‘seems like murder’ [*sic*] and ‘it would give the slaughter profession a more brutal character’.⁴⁶⁸ Likewise, Victor Nielsen-Sæther reported in *Dyrenes Ven* in March 1914 that several of Kristiania’s major butchers had said that ‘they would not have committed themselves to use Kristiania slaughterhouse if kosher slaughter had been allowed there’.⁴⁶⁹ Coming from one of the main opponents of shechita, this statement must of course be viewed sceptically. However, from the above statements from butchers, it seems reasonable that by 1914, the majority of butchers had changed their view on slaughter methods not involving stunning. This conclusion is further supported by a resolution adopted in 1920 by the Norwegian Butchers’ Association [Norges mesterforening for slagtere og pølse-makermestere] stating that no slaughter animals should be killed without previous stunning.⁴⁷⁰

In his response to the magistrate, slaughterhouse manager Lo accepted the butchers’ stance, and referred to possible economic consequences for the slaughterhouse. Regardless of the manager’s statement, the magistrate official added a personal remark in the letter to the marketplace committee, contrary to the manager’s recommendations: ‘It occurs to me that there are no longer any reasons to oppose kosher slaughtering at the slaughterhouse, as this has been in operation for 3 years, and business is in a good state’.⁴⁷¹ Obviously, the magistrate

⁴⁶⁶ *Tidsskrift for slaktere og pølse-maker* 1911, December, p. 43.

⁴⁶⁷ ‘Ældre slagtermester’: ‘Hr. redaktør!’ in *Tidsskrift for Slagtere og Pølse-maker*, August 1914.

⁴⁶⁸ *Dyrenes Ven* 1913, January, pp. 3–4.

⁴⁶⁹ *Dyrenes Ven* 1914, March, p. 25.

⁴⁷⁰ Mendelsohn 1969, p. 373.

⁴⁷¹ Oslo City Archives, the Magistrate’s II. Dept, outgoing mail 14.01.1915–27.06.1915, letter dated 08.02.1915 to the leader of the marketplace committee.

rejected the economic argument as merely a pretext for not allowing shechita. Nevertheless, the committee concurred with the slaughterhouse manager not to allow kosher slaughter in the public slaughterhouse,⁴⁷² and the magistrate refrained from submitting the request to the presidency for further consideration.⁴⁷³

From Sanitary Concerns to Animal Welfare

Although letters from the animal protection movement in the press were few in number (of which only two were signed), the movement's influence, and not least *the cause itself*, should not be underestimated. The two leading animal protection associations reported a strong growth in membership in these years, and they were seemingly able to mobilise further among the upper middle class of Kristiania.⁴⁷⁴ However, more importantly, it was at this very point that the concept of concern for animals seems to have replaced the emphasis on sanitary concerns in the public discourse on slaughtering and slaughterhouse reform. The animal protection movement finally had gained the support of politicians and bureaucrats for yet another of its most important struggles. The movement had already been able to influence the legislation regarding vivisection, and the concern for animals gradually gained more importance in the question of the public slaughterhouses, too. In Kristiania in the 1890s, the establishment of a public slaughterhouse had solely been a question of improving sanitary conditions and thereby improving public health. The sanitary arguments had only at a later stage been supplemented by a greater concern for the slaughter animals. Still in 1910, sanitary concerns were decisive in the decision to close all private butcheries in the city, while some years later in 1913, the decision to close the private kosher butchery and to ban kosher butchering entirely from the city was solely justified by concern for the animals. Obviously, since sanitary concerns never were used as an argument in the question of kosher slaughter, the conditions at the private butchery used for shechita must have been satisfying in the eyes

⁴⁷² Letter from the marketplace committee, dated 10.03.1915, rendered in the mail journal of the Magistrate's II. Dept. (09.06.1914–30.08.1915) as case No. 899/1915 (Oslo City Archives).

⁴⁷³ Oslo City Archives, the Magistrate's II. Dept, outgoing mail 14.01.1915–27.06.1915, letter dated 18.03.1915 to lawyer Fredrik Stang Lund.

⁴⁷⁴ Thora Lund: 'Barneforeningen til Dyrenes Beskyttelse' in *Dyrenes Beskytter*, 1913, p. 17. There had been a significant decline in membership in both the two largest Kristiania-based associations in the first decade after 1900. The Animal Protection Association of Kristiania had about 650 members by the turn of the century and just above 500 members a decade later. However, during the kosher slaughter affair, the membership numbers grew again. In 1913 only, the association gained about 200 new members, which means a growth of over 25% (*Dyrenes Ven*, Jan. 1914, p. 2). The numbers are more uncertain for the Women's Association, but it seems like the Association more than doubled its membership, from about 400 in 1906 to over 900 in 1913 (*Dyrenes Beskytter* 1907, p. 35; *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1914, p. 41).

of both the authorities and animal protectionists. After the new slaughterhouse had been opened, the idea of allowing shechita there in the future, and thus ‘returning’ to ancient, outdated methods, became even less tolerable.

In a remarkably short time, one may observe a change of sensibilities towards the slaughter animals not only among politicians and bureaucrats, but perhaps even more importantly among butchers. This change of sensibilities is in accordance with Noëlie Vialles’ theory of ‘dissociation of slaughtering and butchery’, and even though this shift occurred at a relatively late stage in Norway, it seems to have been more profound than such shifts in other places, since the Jewish slaughter method was completely excluded from the dominant conception of how a slaughterhouse was to be operated. With the introduction of previous stunning methods at the new slaughterhouse, and the subsequent transformation of the butcher profession, the slaughterhouse butcher became ‘innocent’ of the killing of the animals. In contrast, the Jewish shochet would unquestionably remain in the role as the killer of the animal. Thus, the manager of the Farmers’ Slaughterhouse in Aker was of course correct when he remarked that the Jewish slaughter method ‘seems like murder’. His indignation was caused by the fact that the slaughtering conducted at *his* slaughterhouse did not appear as murder any longer. At that facility, the slaughterhouse reforms had reached a level comparable to what Noëlie Vialles observed in the slaughterhouses in Ardour – it was unclear when and by whom the animals were killed. Butchers had been transformed from craftsmen to manual workers, each with a limited and specialised task in the process of making animals into meat.

A similar transition occurred in Kristiania in connection with the establishment of the new slaughterhouse, where in just a few years, slaughtering in small butcher shops conducted by single butchers and their assistants was replaced by a factory-like facility where butchers were transformed from craftsmen to assembly-line labourers. These changes also heightened the sensibilities of butchers and slaughterhouse workers, and the thought of a Jewish shochet in their midst became unbearable. Of course, these butchers were well accustomed to similar non-stunning methods from the private butcheries where they had worked only a few years earlier, and they did not necessarily experience individually a change of sensibility. But the presence of an ‘outdated’ method at a modern facility would threaten the butchers’ newly acquired status as ‘innocent’ slaughterhouse workers, and imply adherence to the slaughter methods of yesterday. Thus, for butchers, the problem with shechita was not so much the

sufferings of the animals as the role of the butcher. The method maintained the relationship between the butcher as killer and the animal as victim, whereas the new stunning methods and procedures at the new public slaughterhouse blurred and, to a certain extent, abolished this relationship.

Further, butchers argued that the presence of shechita at the modern slaughterhouse could ruin the facility's reputation, suggesting that farmers and consumers feared kosher slaughtering. Of course, this fear could not have been invoked without the effective agitation of the animal protection movement and its demonising, and sometimes untruthful account of the Jewish slaughter method. Using terms such as 'ritual Jew-slaughter' and 'worship in the form of animal cruelty', the animal protectionists played on fear of Jews, as well as on fear of the ritual and the primitive character of kosher slaughtering. Allied with the peasant-movement newspaper *Landmandsposten*, the animal protection movement could stir up emotions among cattle-breeding readers in rural areas around Kristiania, and thus potentially prevent these farmers from selling their animals to be slaughtered at the Kristiania slaughterhouse.

The initiative to establish a public slaughterhouse originated from veterinary authorities, where Ole Malm had considered a public slaughterhouse as one of the most important means to defeat the spread of contagious diseases from animals to humans. As head of the national Veterinary Authority, Malm had been, ever since his appointment, mainly concerned about the public health. The development of modern veterinary medicine elsewhere in Europe in the late 19th century had also emerged out of the needs of conventional medicine, especially with respect to fighting contagious diseases.⁴⁷⁵ Even though Malm considered himself to be compassionate towards animals, he was primarily concerned about humans. Malm's somewhat instrumental view on animals and veterinary medicine was challenged by the animal protection movement, and was eventually incompatible with the views of animal protectionists. Thus, it is not difficult to understand why animal protectionists mocked Malm when in 1910 he had claimed that 'we are a pioneering nation when it comes to the question of public slaughterhouses'.⁴⁷⁶ In their eyes, for a slaughterhouse to have the improvement of

⁴⁷⁵ The spread of contagious animal diseases was one of the main themes discussed at the very first European veterinary congress in Hamburg in 1863, and was to be given much attention also in future congresses (Swabe 1999, p. 98). Prior to the 1892 slaughterhouse law, veterinary medicine in Norway had primarily been aimed at improving agriculture or had military purposes. After Malm had succeeded in persuading politicians to adopt the slaughterhouse law, he also ensured that the government's meat control was transferred from the medical authorities to his own veterinary office (Asdal 2005, p. 37).

⁴⁷⁶ *Dyrenes Ven*, 1910, December, p. 90.

public health as its only rationale was far from satisfying. For Malm, however, concern for animals could never overrule the needs of humans. This understanding of veterinary medicine should also explain why Malm sympathised with the Jews on the question of kosher slaughter – the needs of animals should never come before the needs of humans, including religious freedom.

Malm's understanding of the relationship between veterinary medicine, public health and animal concerns had prevailed among other physicians, veterinarians, politicians and bureaucrats, and was only at this point seriously beginning to be challenged by the animal protection movement. Thus, the practice of kosher butchering was long tolerated by both health authorities and veterinary authorities because it did not constitute any risk to public health. However, with the centralisation of all slaughter within the city of Kristiania, an exception for the Jewish method was to be perceived as unacceptable. The standardisation and centralisation of slaughter meant less liberty for the individual butcher to choose his method of slaughter. Religious commandments were not considered as a legitimate cause for exemptions from the general rule, even though the method itself – when properly conducted – was not considered as animal cruelty by the slaughterhouse administration (Amund Lo), and did not pose a financial burden on the slaughterhouse (the magistrate). Lo's proposal to let Jews slaughter animals before the slaughterhouse's regular opening hours confirms that the manager himself did not find shechita crueler than any other method. Fear of protests among regular butchers and fear of public opinion in general probably led Lo to suggest that kosher slaughter in any case should take place outside the regular opening hours, so to say under the cover of night.

Out of Sight, Out of Mind?

However, Lo's attempt to compromise was fruitless, and failed under the emerging discourse on animal protection that had gained the support of politicians. With a new, modern, centralised slaughterhouse built, and with the agitation of the animal protection movement and the peasant press, the Jewish method was viewed as outdated, irrational and anachronistic, even by some who in essence did not regard the method as any more cruel than the stunning methods. The very existence of the new slaughterhouse made it difficult to assume other positions and to defend other practices, even if one did not find these practices contradictory to animal concerns. With the animal protectionists' hegemonic position in the

debate, politicians in the presidency feared that the reputation of the prestigious slaughterhouse could be damaged. What they feared was perhaps not so much the practical consequences of allowing kosher slaughter at the slaughterhouse, but the controversy that it would create in the press, and the reactions it would cause amongst farmers and other users of the slaughterhouse. Hence, banning shechita from the city seemed inevitable.

The animal protection movement had achieved their goal – as the city council substitute representative and animal protectionist Thora Lund put it in 1910: ‘We expect from our city [...] that kosher slaughter will be banished from the territory of the City’.⁴⁷⁷ Even though this was the result, animal protectionists were not satisfied. During spring 1913, the Mosaic Congregation began using a private butchery just outside the city borders in the municipality of Aker, only a few kilometres from the newly inaugurated Kristiania slaughterhouse. In other words, the ‘problem’ still existed, and the animal protection movement promptly reacted with countermeasures. This controversy gave rise to an even stronger ‘opinion’ than what had been the case in Kristiania. However, this time defenders of kosher slaughter mobilised, and the debate was to be far more polarised. For the first time it also caught the attention of legal authorities, and this is the main theme for the next chapter.

⁴⁷⁷ *Dyrenes Ven*, 1910, December, p. 91.

3.3: The Attempt to Prohibit Shechita in Aker, 1913–1914

As implied in the previous chapter, the animal protection movement continued and intensified its campaign against the Jewish method of religious slaughter after the city council had banned the practice in Kristiania on February 12, 1913. Shortly after the city's Jewish population had been denied religious slaughter at the new public slaughterhouse, or in any private butchery, the Mosaic Congregation concluded an agreement with the butcher Oscar Hansen in Etterstad, a suburb in neighbouring Aker municipality. The Animal Protection Association of Kristiania regarded this as a provocation, and promptly initiated countermeasures. Since there was no public slaughterhouse in Aker, and therefore no possibility for a political solution as had been the case in Kristiania, the association instead turned to the police. The association succeeded in persuading the police and the prosecuting authorities of Aker to act against the slaughter activities of the Mosaic Congregation, and the congregation's trustee [forstander] Axel Grün was charged with violation of the penal code's provisions on animal abuse (§ 382).

This legal process is hardly mentioned in Oskar Mendelsohn's book on the history of the Jews in Norway,⁴⁷⁸ while Per Ole Johansen mentions only briefly that in 1913, criminal proceedings were brought against 'those responsible' for the butchery in Aker used by Jews.⁴⁷⁹ Although the attitudes of the Norwegian police and legal authorities occupy a prominent role in the rest of Johansen's book, the initiatives of the police in the kosher slaughter affair are not addressed, other than in connection with the role of the leading police officer and animal protectionist Johan Søhr in the affair.⁴⁸⁰ Although Søhr in 1926 threatened to bring charges against the Jews in case parliament failed to approve a law against kosher slaughter,⁴⁸¹ he never acted against the Jewish slaughter method in his capacity as a police

⁴⁷⁸ Mendelsohn 1969, pp. 571–572.

⁴⁷⁹ Johansen 1984, p. 63.

⁴⁸⁰ Johan Søhr (1867–1949), as chief of the criminal department of the Kristiania police, played an important role in identifying and detaining several spies in Kristiania during the First World War, among others the infamous Finnish-German spy Walter von Gerich (Walter von Rautenfels). Already during his career in the Kristiania police, Søhr expressed negative attitudes about the Jews, and as an animal protectionist, Søhr was one of the most ardent opponents of Jewish religious slaughter. For his relentless commitment against the Jewish slaughter method, Søhr was elected leader of the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania in 1929.

⁴⁸¹ Johan Søhr: 'Schächtningen' in *Aftenposten*, 02.08.1926.

officer. This had, however, previously been attempted unsuccessfully in 1913 by Søhr's predecessor as chief of police in Aker, Johannes Ditlef Fürst.⁴⁸²

This chapter will follow the preparations undertaken by the police and the public prosecutors in the legal process against the Mosaic Congregation's trustee, and will then look in to the initiative taken by the same authorities to introduce a national prohibition against shechita when the case against Grün failed. A key argument will be that the police's and the prosecutors' roles as promoters of a ban on Jewish religious slaughter originated in the conception of kosher slaughter as a problem of public order and morality. Although demands for a prohibition in Aker unquestionably were a consequence of the ban in Kristiania, the police's willingness, if not eagerness, to put an end to kosher slaughtering in Aker must be viewed on the background of the public debate arising after Kristiania's Jewish community began using a private slaughterhouse in Aker.

Contributing most to transforming the kosher slaughter affair from a question of animal welfare to a problem of public disturbance were the negative images and (mis)conceptions of the Jewish slaughter method conveyed in the press during this period. During spring 1913, debates in newspaper columns intensified in both scope and content. In addition to animal protectionists, supporters of the Jewish community's right to practice religious slaughter, as well as anti-Semites, such as the author Nils Kjær and the lawyer Eivind Saxlund, entered the debate. The second section of this chapter will therefore be devoted to an analysis of the newspaper debate during the spring of 1913 and all of 1914, a debate which also was one of the first, if not *the* first debate in the mainstream press where Norway's Jewish community was attacked with vehement anti-Semitic rhetoric.

Anti-Semitism had of course existed in the Norwegian public during the 19th century and in the first decade of the new century, but the debate in 1913–1914 was the first time anti-Semitic rhetoric was directed against Norway's Jewish population as a collective, and not against individuals or the obscure entity of a Jewish conspiracy. Anti-Semitic agitation would later be an integrated part of some of the Norwegian press during the years after the Great War, but unlike the kosher slaughter affair, these 'threats' of 'Bolshevik', 'internationalist' or 'capitalist' Jew were built on abstract stereotypes from a universe of ideas which had little to

⁴⁸² Johannes Ditlef Fürst (1855–1926) served as chief of police in the police district of Aker from 1907 until Johan Søhr succeeded him in 1925.

do with actual events in Norway.⁴⁸³ However, before examining the press debate during the kosher butchering controversy in Aker, it is pertinent to describe the course of events in the process against Axel Grün.⁴⁸⁴

The Judicial Investigation of Axel Grün

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the private butchery in Kristiania's Rodeløkka district, used by Kristiania's Jewish community, was ordered closed by the city magistrate by the end of February 1913. Shortly after, the Mosaic Congregation concluded an agreement with the butcher Oscar Hansen of Etterstad in the neighbouring Aker municipality. Already on April 5, 1913, *Aftenposten* reported that kosher slaughtering had been 'transferred' to Aker, and in late April, the peasant-movement newspaper *Landmandsposten* printed rumours about the Jewish slaughter method having been 'introduced in Aker'.⁴⁸⁵ In a sensational tone, the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania could in *Dyrenes Ven* May issue provide details, namely that kosher slaughtering took place twice weekly in Oscar Hansen's butchery on Strømsveien in Etterstad.

The fact that Kristiania Jews, despite the ban on kosher slaughter in the city proper, had continued their 'ritual slaughter' just across the city border aroused great indignation in the association.⁴⁸⁶ A complaint was sent to the Aker chief of police, Johannes Ditlef Fürst, who then turned to the association's leader, Victor Nielsen-Sæther, for an opinion on whether kosher slaughter could be regarded as animal cruelty punishable under the penal code's § 382.⁴⁸⁷ On May 5, Nielsen-Sæther managed to organise a demonstration of kosher slaughtering at the Etterstad butchery. Present, in addition to the *shochet* (the Jewish butcher) and his assistants, were the inspector of the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania, Carl Hirsch, the inspector of the Women's Animal Protection Association, Edvin H. Thorson, army veterinary captain Peder Marum, a journalist of the newspaper *Dagbladet* and Nielsen-Sæther himself. The 'inspectors' were men hired by the animal protection associations to

⁴⁸³ See for instance Simonsen 2009 and 2012.

⁴⁸⁴ Axel Julius Grün (1853–1921) served as the Mosaic Congregation's trustee [forstander] for two periods, 1897–1898 and 1912–1921. Grün, a Danish-born Jew of German extraction, ran a grocery store that must have been profitable, judging from his family's dwellings in the 1910 census (a 260 sq. m. apartment in fashionable Skovveien).

⁴⁸⁵ 'Det hellige Dyrplageri' in *Landmandsposten*, 28.04.1913.

⁴⁸⁶ 'Jødenes rituelle slagtning (Schächtningen)' in *Dyrenes Ven*, May 1913, p. 33.

⁴⁸⁷ 'Jødenes rituelle slagtning (Schächtningen)' in *Dyrenes Ven*, May 1913, p. 33; Ole Malm: 'Dyrebeskyttelsen og schächtningen' in *Aftenposten*, 20.02.1914. Unfortunately, the Aker Police Department's archives do not contain any records from this period. However, the accounts of Malm and the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania are concurrent on these incidents.

monitor the treatment of animals in the city of Kristiania and its surrounding municipalities, and their reports were printed monthly in *Dyrenes Ven* and *Dyrenes Beskytter*. Also on this occasion, the two inspectors each wrote a report, both of which were enclosed with Nielsen-Sæther's own statement to the chief of police.

In response to the police chief's request, Nielsen-Sæther stated that he had no doubt that 'any Norwegian court of justice composed of people being aware of man's obligations towards animals, would declare that the practice of kosher slaughter is contrary to the provisions in the penal code's § 382'. Nielsen-Sæther further recommended that the chief of police press charges against those responsible, but he also stressed that the association did not seek any penalty for Oscar Hansen, the (non-Jewish) owner of the butchery used by the Jewish community. The reports of the two inspectors, Hirsch and Thorson, both contained a brief description and each inspector's assessment of the slaughtering. Hirsch concluded, 'It is terrifying that anything so raw and barbaric can take place among civilised people; but of course regular people do not know how *terrible* this slaughter is'.⁴⁸⁸ Despite the fact that the report obviously regarded the Jews as neither 'civilised' nor 'regular people', it formed the basis for the police's further work in the case.

A few days after receiving the opinion of the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania, Chief of Police Fürst notified both butcher Hansen and the Mosaic Congregation that they would be charged with violation of the penal code's § 382 if they did not cease to slaughter according to the Jewish method in the butchery at Etterstad.⁴⁸⁹ Simultaneously, Fürst informed all butchers in Aker that they would be prosecuted if they let kosher slaughter be conducted in their butcheries.⁴⁹⁰ The Mosaic Congregation must have ignored the threat of a charge – in any case; on May 20, the chief of police requested the Kristiania police to interrogate the trustee of the Mosaic Congregation, Axel Grün.⁴⁹¹ An intervention by the congregation's lawyer caused the National Director of Public Prosecutions [Riksadvokaten]⁴⁹² on June 12 to inform the Aker chief of police that because the case involved a matter of principle, and because the Aker police could not press charges for something that had been

⁴⁸⁸ 'Jødenes rituelle slagtning (Schächtningen)' in *Dyrenes Ven*, May 1913, p. 33.

⁴⁸⁹ The Norwegian Penal Code of 1902, chapter 38, § 382: 'Anyone, who by neglect, overwork, or in any other way makes himself guilty in coarse or vicious abuse of animals, or contributes thereto, will be punished with fines or imprisonment up to 6 months' (*Norges Love* 1908, p. 860).

⁴⁹⁰ 'Den jødiske "schächtning" taaes ikke i Aker' in *Aftenposten*, 09.05.1913.

⁴⁹¹ *Dyrenes Ven*, March 1914, p. 17.

⁴⁹² Director of Public Prosecutions from 1911 to 1929 was Peder Kjerschow (1857–1944).

practiced for years in Kristiania without ever being prosecuted, the Director of Public Prosecutions himself would decide whether to press charges against Grün.⁴⁹³ This intervention delayed a clarification in the case over the summer; however, on September 23 Chief of Police Fürst summoned Grün to a judicial examination before a investigating judge on the charge of having violated the penal code's provisions on animal cruelty (§ 382).⁴⁹⁴ Fürst also summoned four expert witnesses proposed by the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania. However, the investigation was further postponed as the investigating judge of the District Court of Aker found the expert witnesses picked by the chief of police to be biased.⁴⁹⁵ One of the expert witnesses, the physician and Liberal Party Member of Parliament, Dr. Ludvig Kragtorp, had already in May written a piece in the newspaper *Tidens Tegn* highly negative to kosher slaughter,⁴⁹⁶ and Ole Malm later claimed that the Animal Protection Association had obtained statements in advance from the three other expert witnesses.⁴⁹⁷

The investigating judge of the District Court of Aker discharged Dr. Kragtorp and the three other expert witnesses, and summoned two new expert witnesses: the head of the government's Veterinary Authority, Ole Malm, and veterinary Halfdan Holth of the Veterinary Institute.⁴⁹⁸ Finally, on January 19, 1914, the first hearing of the judicial investigation took place at the District Court of Aker. The charged, Axel Grün, gave lengthy testimony, and several witnesses working at Oscar Hansen's butchery were interrogated. In addition, representatives of the animal protection movement (Nielsen-Sæther and the two inspectors) gave an account of the demonstration conducted in Hansen's butchery the previous year.⁴⁹⁹ Unfortunately, no records of the negotiations remain in the archives of Aker District Court at the Regional State Archive of Oslo, but from the correspondence between the

⁴⁹³ Ole Malm: 'Dyrebeskyttelsen og schächtningen' in *Aftenposten*, 20.02.1914.

⁴⁹⁴ Ole Malm: 'Dyrebeskyttelsen og schächtningen' in *Aftenposten*, 20.02.1914.

⁴⁹⁵ The investigating judge (or examining magistrate) of the District Court of Aker [Aker Kriminaldommer] was responsible for administrating judicial investigations [rettslig efterforskning]. He had no judicial power, and it was up to the Regional Public Prosecutor (or in this case, the Director of Public Prosecutions) to decide whether the judicial investigation eventually would lead to a prosecution.

⁴⁹⁶ L[udvig] Kragtorp: 'Den jødiske slagtemaate. Svar til dr. Wilhelm Schencke' in *Tidens Tegn*, 21.05.1913.

⁴⁹⁷ Ole Malm: 'Dyrebeskyttelsen og schächtningen' in *Aftenposten* 20.02.1914. The other expert witnesses were municipal veterinary Adolf Jacobsen, army veterinary captain Peder Marum and the manager of Aker's municipal slaughterhouse, Fritz Lütcherat. Lütcherat had already, in connection with the controversy the previous year in Kristiania, described negative characteristics of shechita (*Dyrenes Ven* 1913, January, pp. 3–4).

⁴⁹⁸ Halfdan Holth (1880–1950) was, as Norway's first professor of veterinary medicine at the Veterinary Institute in Kristiania (from 1914), a close colleague of Malm, and was named director of the Institute after Malm's death in 1917. Holth was, as Malm, an expert in contagious diseases, and wrote numerous works on bacteriology and serology (Horne 1925, p. 225 and Thorshaug 1934, p. 320).

⁴⁹⁹ 'Schächtningen for retten' in *Aftenposten* 19.01.1914; 'Den jødiske Schächtning. Det første forhør' in *Dyrenes Ven*, January 1914.

Regional Public Prosecutor and the Director of Public Prosecutions, together with the newspaper coverage, it is possible to create a general picture of the process.⁵⁰⁰ In addition, copies of the report written by Malm and Holth have survived both in the archives of Malm's veterinary office in The National Archives and in those of the Mosaic Congregation of Oslo.

The report is dated February 12, and must have been submitted to the court shortly after it had been written. In the report, Malm and Holth commenced by dismissing allegations that sanitary conditions at the Etterstad butchery were unsatisfactory. In the press and the journals of the animal protection movement, the butchery had been described as merely a filthy and narrow shed, and photographs of the exterior seemingly confirmed this.⁵⁰¹ However, in the two veterinaries' opinion, the butchery satisfied modern standards with regard to size, construction, lighting and ventilation.⁵⁰² In the following part of the report, Malm and Holth claimed that neither the cut itself, nor the time passed until death occurred caused the animals any greater sufferings. They admitted that the method of casting had room for improvement, but emphasised that this was possible to solve by simple means. The report concluded much as Malm had characterised the Jewish slaughter method on previous occasions: 'The slaughter method used by Jews, the so-called "schächtning", conducted correctly, does not cause any greater pain or torment for the "schächtet" [*sic*] animal than does the best among other methods of slaughtering'. The two veterinaries stressed that any movements observed after the lethal incision or during the blooddraining were merely unconscious reflex movements that did not imply any tactile pain. However, these movements 'would always appear as a sinister spectacle, even to a greater extent than with other slaughter methods', according to the report. Further, concerning the manner whereby animals were slaughtered in this specific butchery in Aker, the two veterinaries stated, 'There are no testimonies that suggest that the kosher slaughter in Oscar Hansen's butchery is performed in any particularly cruel way, or that the casting has caused any injuries among the animals'.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰⁰ Unfortunately, a ban on keeping minutes made the press coverage of the negotiations sparse.

⁵⁰¹ Notably 'Et grufultt barbari. Jødisk slagtning i Aker' in *Dagbladet*, 06.05.1913.

⁵⁰² Oslo Jewish Museum, Archives of the Mosaic Congregation [Det mosaiske trossamfunns arkiv], Diverse ca. 1892-ca. 1981, 06: Det Mosaiske Trossamfundets Schechita-mappe 1914–1929, Transcript of statement dated 12.02.1914 by the late veterinary director O. Malm and veterinary Halfdan Holth, p. 3.

⁵⁰³ Oslo Jewish Museum, Archives of the Mosaic Congregation [Det mosaiske trossamfunns arkiv], Diverse ca. 1892-ca. 1981, 06: Det Mosaiske Trossamfundets Schechita-mappe 1914–1929, Transcript of statement dated 12.02.1914 by the late veterinary director O. Malm and veterinary Halfdan Holth, pp. 8–9.

Charges Dropped

In late March 1914, the documents and the testimonies of the witnesses and the report of the expert witnesses were submitted to the Regional Public Prosecutor of Kristiania, who was to submit recommendations to the Director of Public Prosecutions on whether the case should be tried before a court of justice. The Regional Public Prosecutor received the documents from the interrogation court on March 28, 1914 together with the recommendation of Chief of Police Fürst *not* to prosecute Grün on the charge of violating the penal code's § 382. The chief of police remarked 'as indicated in the judicial and the *extra-judicial* expert statements, the opinions are divided on the question of whether kosher slaughter can be regarded as animal cruelty in the sense of the penal code'.⁵⁰⁴ The chief of police obviously gave the opinions expressed by the dismissed witnesses and those of the expert witnesses appointed by the court equal weight, even though the former had been found biased by the interrogation judge. Instead of removing suspicion that the Jewish community had violated the penal code, the testimonies of Malm and Holth had the opposite effect, and were used merely to raise some doubt about the well-established notion that Jews were guilty of animal cruelty.

For the prosecutor, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to counter the testimonies of the country's two leading veterinary experts that the Jewish community had violated the penal code. However, Chief of Police Fürst was determined to put an end to the kosher slaughter in Aker, and justified this with the concern to the public: 'the Chief of Police finds the slaughter method used by the Jews to be greatly offensive to *our* common morals and concepts, as well as counter to today's demand for more humane treatment of animals'.⁵⁰⁵ Since the testimonies of the two expert witnesses could not be ignored, Fürst sought to support his view by what he referred to as *extra-judicial expert statements* – in this case they were the statements of another veterinary, district veterinary B. A. Hjelde,⁵⁰⁶ printed in *Dyrenes Ven* in March 1914, *after* the expert witnesses had testified in court. The chief of police concurred with Hjelde that 'when killing *our* animals, only the perfect [*sic*] slaughter method should be allowed'.⁵⁰⁷ With the expression 'perfect slaughter method', Hjelde had referred to the method involving

⁵⁰⁴ The Regional State Archives in Oslo, The Regional Public Prosecutor of Oslo [Oslo statsadvokatembeter], Justisprotokoller I: Hovedrekken, 40b (25.04.1913–26.06.1914), p. 624. My italics.

⁵⁰⁵ The Regional State Archives in Oslo, The Regional Public Prosecutor of Oslo [Oslo statsadvokatembeter], Justisprotokoller I: Hovedrekken, 40b (25.04.1913–26.06.1914), p. 624. My italics.

⁵⁰⁶ Baard Arne Hjelde (1872–1935) was district veterinary in the municipality of Eidsvoll in Akershus County.

⁵⁰⁷ The Regional State Archives in Oslo, The Regional Public Prosecutor of Oslo [Oslo statsadvokatembeter], Justisprotokoller I: Hovedrekken, 40b (25.04.1913–26.06.1914), p. 624. My italics.

previous stunning.⁵⁰⁸ However, since the chief of police could not entirely ignore the official judicial expert statements by Malm and Holth, he could not recommend that the Regional Public Prosecutor prosecute Axel Grün.⁵⁰⁹ Not only would it be unlikely that a court of justice would disregard the expert witnesses in the same manner as Fürst himself had done – in addition, a trial would have consequences only for the single incident that Grün had been investigated for and not the practice itself. To put an end to the practice permanently, Fürst reminded the Regional Public Prosecutor that an amendment to the penal code permitted the king (i. e. the cabinet) to issue a decree with ‘general regulations for transporting and slaughtering animals’.⁵¹⁰ Such a decree was yet to be drafted, and Chief of Police Fürst suggested to the Regional Public Prosecutor that one should try to begin drafting the decree and include in it a prohibition of kosher slaughter.⁵¹¹

Since the Director of Public Prosecutions already in June the previous year had reserved for himself the decision whether to prosecute Grün, the Regional Public Prosecutor submitted the case documents together with the recommendations of the Aker chief of police not to prosecute Grün. The Regional Public Prosecutor also concurred with Fürst that a future royal decree on slaughtering and transporting animals should include a prohibition of kosher slaughter.⁵¹² The Director of Public Prosecutions adopted the recommendations in their entirety, and submitted the documents further to the Ministry of Agriculture: ‘as I assume the Honourable Ministry would be interested in knowing about the case, especially with respect to the drafting of general regulations on slaughter’.⁵¹³ Thus, the documents found their way to the Ministry of Agriculture, where they were passed to the proper section – the Veterinary Office headed by Ole Malm.

⁵⁰⁸ B[aard] A[rne] Hjelde: ‘Fra amtsdyrlæge B. A. Hjelde, Eidsvold’ in *Dyrenes Ven*, March 1914, p. 22.

⁵⁰⁹ In a letter to the Regional Public Prosecutor, Grün’s lawyer J. M. Lund made the same observation and reminded the Regional Public Prosecutor that the testimonies of the expert witnesses would be sufficient to decide if one should charge Grün (The Regional State Archives in Oslo, The Regional Public Prosecutor of Oslo [Oslo statsadvokatembeter], Justisprotokoller I: Hovedrekken, 40b (25.04.1913–26.06.1914), p. 624, rendering of letter from lawyer J. M. Lund, dated 17.04.1914).

⁵¹⁰ ‘Lov om Straffelovens Ikrafttræden’ in *Norges Love* 1908, p. 878, § 15.

⁵¹¹ The Regional State Archives in Oslo, The Regional Public Prosecutor of Oslo [Oslo statsadvokatembeter], Justisprotokoller I: Hovedrekken, 40b (25.04.1913–26.06.1914), p. 624.

⁵¹² The National Archives, The Director of Public Prosecutions [Riksadvokaten], Ordinært arkiv, journaler og registre, journal XVIII (11.08.1913–27.06.1914), fol. 301a, case No. 1101/1914.

⁵¹³ The National Archives, The Director of Public Prosecutions [Riksadvokaten], Ordinært arkiv, journaler og registre, journal XVIII (11.08.1913–27.06.1914), fol. 301b, rendering of letter to the Ministry of Agriculture dated 05.05.1914.

Despite the urging of the Director of Public Prosecutions to include regulations on kosher slaughter in a future royal decree on slaughtering and transporting animals, Malm had no intention to draft such a decree, and returned the documents to the Director of Public Prosecutions on June 20 without replying to the accompanying letter.⁵¹⁴ However, a similar initiative from the animal protection movement in the form of a petition asking the Storting to instruct the cabinet to issue a royal decree on slaughtering and transporting animals made Prime Minister (and Minister of Agriculture) Gunnar Knudsen ask Malm to prepare a draft for the decree. This draft would eventually include a paragraph that protected shechita; however, this paragraph will be treated further in a later chapter. The current chapter will proceed by discussing the role of the police and the prosecuting authorities in the struggle against kosher slaughter in Aker.

Strategies of the Police and Prosecuting Authorities

Although the police in Aker were unsuccessful in prohibiting kosher slaughter,⁵¹⁵ the kosher slaughter controversy in Aker has striking similarities with the controversy in Kristiania a few months earlier. In both cases, local authorities were siding with the animal protection movement, while the national veterinary authorities were prepared to allow the Jewish community to continue the practice of shechita, albeit with some modifications. An interesting feature of the Aker controversy, however, was the interplay between the police on one side and the prosecuting and judicial authorities on the other.

In Aker, it seems clear that the chief of police sought to manipulate the outcome of the case in favour of the animal protection movement by choosing expert witnesses whose attitudes towards kosher slaughter were known to be negative.⁵¹⁶ The Director of Public Prosecutions's unusual initiative of June 12, 1913 to determine whether Grün was to be prosecuted suggests that the prosecuting authorities were aware of the danger of the case being manipulated by the police. Likewise, the investigating judge of the District Court of Aker would not allow the

⁵¹⁴ The National Archives, The Director of Public Prosecutions [Riksadvokaten], Ordinært arkiv, journaler og – registre, journal XVIII (11.08.1913–27.06.1914), fol. 359a, case No. 1555/1914. The documents were forwarded to the Regional Public Prosecutor.

⁵¹⁵ The Director of Public Prosecutions formally dropped the case against Axel Grün on May 5, 1914 (The Regional State Archives in Oslo, The Regional Public Prosecutor of Oslo [Oslo statsadvokatembeter], Justisprotokoller I: Hovedrekken, 40b (25.04.1913–26.06.1914), p. 624).

⁵¹⁶ Fürst was criticised for this not only by Malm, but also in a letter in the newspaper *Social-Demokraten*, submitted by the merchant Josef Siew (1876–1942). Siew, who had his education from a yeshiva in his native Lithuania, would later be elected trustee of the Mosaic Congregation i Oslo from 1934–1937, but did not hold any office in the Congregation in these years (Mendelsohn 1969, p. 422 and p. 587).

chief of police to use expert witnesses picked by the animal protection movement. Thus, the (over)zealous behaviour of Chief of Police Fürst was corrected by interventions of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the investigating judge in order ensure that the process was carried out in accordance with the rules of the legal system.

This interplay also reflects the tendency that the criminologist Per Ole Johansen observes for the period, based on theories of police behaviour: police officers operated as ‘watchmen’, concerned with enforcing law and order, while officials in the bureaucracy operated as ‘legalists’, more concerned with correcting the police and acting according to the rules of the judicial system.⁵¹⁷ Although prosecuting authorities disagreed with Aker’s chief of police concerning means, they seem to have agreed with the chief of police concerning ends. The prosecuting authorities adopted the chief of police’s initiative to solve the kosher slaughter problem through other channels than the courtroom, channels that would not involve expert testimonies in favour of the Jewish community. There are no indications that the Regional Public Prosecutor or the Director of Public Prosecutions had any qualms about supporting Fürst’s initiative, even though it was based on statements from persons whom the court had declared to be biased. Thus, even prosecuting authorities gave the ‘extra judicial statements’ greater credibility than the statements of the court-appointed expert witnesses Malm and Holth.

It is not apparent why the Aker chief of police, Johannes Ditlef Fürst, was so determined to put an end to kosher slaughtering in Aker. Unlike his successor as chief of police in Aker, Johan Sørh, Fürst is not known to have had any close ties to the animal protection movement.⁵¹⁸ However, what Fürst did have in common with his successor, was a strong outspoken suspicion against foreigners. The same year, Fürst devoted much energy to the struggle against the ‘flood’ of Gypsies into the country, and in a piece in *Morgenbladet* Fürst suggested that the legislation on vagrancy should be more stringent. Since Gypsies usually earned money by selling artisan products, the police were not allowed to expel them, lamented Fürst. Since there were problems enough with ‘our own Travellers’ [tatere], Fürst wanted a prohibition of the entrance of foreign Gypsies into the country in order to ‘liberate

⁵¹⁷ Johansen 1984, p. 88.

⁵¹⁸ It may be worth noting that the Norwegian ‘Who’s Who’ from 1912 mentions that Fürst had a keen interest in dog training (Brinchmann & Daae 1912, p. 79). These biographical data were usually submitted by the individuals in question.

the country of such suspicious characters [løse eksistenser], living as parasites on society'.⁵¹⁹ Even though Fürst's attitudes towards the Gypsies by no means were uncommon in the period (or even today), his demand for stricter immigration policy anticipated the measures against 'suspicious' foreigners taken by the Norwegian police authorities during the First World War and in the interwar period. Most of these foreigners were Gypsies or Eastern European Jews, and as suggested by Per Ole Johansen, there was deep mistrust also of Jews among police and judicial authorities in these years.⁵²⁰ Similar legislation as suggested by Fürst in 1913 was in fact adopted by the Storting in 1915 as an amendment to the Aliens Act of 1901 in order to counter the increasing flood of immigrants, many of whom were described as 'extremely inferior'.⁵²¹

Thus, the discrimination against Jews by the police and other judicial authorities in Norway is already well documented for this period. However, Johansen in his study relates this discrimination mainly to the outbreak of the First World War and the increasing fear of spies (and later refugees). Although his study takes 1914 as its starting point, the majority of the cases he refers to took place in the later war years and during the 1920s and 1930s. The case against Grün suggests that the tendency of some police officers to act as 'watchmen' and to discriminate against Jews already existed when the Great War broke out. Therefore, the origins of these attitudes must be searched for in the established popular discourses on Jews, as much as in the context of the Great War. Thus, it would be relevant to look into the representations of Jews and kosher slaughtering in order to establish the context in which police officers acted.

Because of the chronology, the public debate on kosher slaughtering during 1913 and the first half of 1914 cannot fully explain why Grün was charged in the first place. However, it may contribute to explain the increasing eagerness of police to put an end to the practice of shechita, even if doing so involved ignoring the testimonies of expert witnesses, and not least, Fürst's initiative towards the prosecuting authorities to have kosher slaughter prohibited by law. On the other hand, public interest in the issue was caused by the decision to prosecute Grün in the first place. Thus, the public debate and the actions of the police and judicial

⁵¹⁹ Politimester Fürst: 'Zigøinerplagen' in *Morgenbladet*, 22.05.1913.

⁵²⁰ Johansen 1984, p. 18. Johansen also claims that the Ministry of Justice in the 1920s was unsatisfied with Fürst for his *liberal* attitudes towards foreigners; however, this probably says more about the attitudes of the Ministry at the time and those of Fürst's successor Søhr (Johansen 1984, p. 74).

⁵²¹ Johansen 1984, p. 12.

authorities influenced each other, and this dynamic contributed to enhance the intensity of the controversy.

The Slaughter Affair in the Press

The ban on kosher slaughter adopted in Kristiania the previous winter of 1913 had already contributed to brand the Jewish method of religious slaughter as animal cruelty. Since there were no plans for a similar public slaughterhouse in Aker bringing all slaughtering under the auspices of the municipal authorities,⁵²² the only way to make the Jewish community cease to slaughter in Aker would be by prosecuting either under the criminal law's provisions on animal cruelty or on sanitary grounds. When the attempt to prosecute Grün for violating the penal code's § 382 failed, the case had reached proportions in the press that could justify further measures through other channels. Thus, the initiatives of police and prosecutors had created a press controversy that in both scope and temperature exceeded the press debate the previous year in Kristiania. Unlike the relatively modest public debate discussed in the previous chapter, the judicial investigation of Grün had triggered a flow of letters and articles in the press, mostly negative, but some also in favour of the Jewish community's right to slaughter according to their religious commandments. However, for the first time, the agitation also found its sources in an anti-Semitic ideology, and many of the images and clichés that were to characterise the debate later in the 1920s surfaced for the first time during spring 1913 and the following spring of 1914.

The following sections of this chapter will concentrate on the press coverage of the affair in Kristiania and Aker. Since the amount of letters, articles and editorials is substantial, only a few of the most representative texts will be analysed in a non-chronological order to give an impression of the different categories of argumentation against kosher slaughtering.⁵²³ The public debate on the issue had, as shown in the previous chapter, started in the Kristiania newspapers around Christmas 1912. However, as the question was settled by the city council already in February 1913, the debate was never allowed to escalate. With the lengthy and complicated judicial process in Aker against Axel Grün (which lasted for over a year from April 1913 to May 1914), most main Kristiania newspapers opened their columns for letters

⁵²² A private centralised slaughterhouse already existed in Aker, the Farmer's Common Slaughterhouse at Løren [Bøndernes Fællesslagteri]. The sanitary conditions at this slaughterhouse and at the few private slaughterhouses were overall probably better in rural Aker than in Kristiania, thus making the need for centralisation in a municipal slaughterhouse lesser than in Kristiania.

⁵²³ A chronological, although far from complete review of the debate can be found in Mendelsohn 1969, p. 572f.

from readers, and some editors also participated actively in the debate. Although most of the newspapers seem to have sympathised with the opponents of kosher slaughtering, letters supportive of allowing kosher slaughtering were also printed. Noteworthy is that no official representatives from the two Jewish congregations in Kristiania participated in the debate,⁵²⁴ although a prominent member of the Mosaic Congregation, Joseph Siew, speaking as a private person, defended the Jewish right to shechita in two letters in *Social-Demokraten*.⁵²⁵ In addition to Malm, the most prominent defender of the Jewish community's right to kosher slaughter was another scholar, a historian of religions at Kristiania University, Dr. Wilhelm Schencke (1869–1946). Schencke, who had been educated at the University's Faculty of Theology with the purpose of becoming a clergyman, was at the time a fellow in Semitic languages at the University's Faculty of Humanities, and was after some controversy appointed by the Storting as the University's first professor in the history of religions in 1914. As professor, Schencke argued for liberal ideas, such as abolishing the education and formation of clergymen to the State church at the University, as well as the secularisation of the study of Christianity.⁵²⁶

Among the opponents were now not only the animal protectionists, but also the peasant-movement Kristiania-based newspaper *Landmandsposten* with its nationalist editor Thorvald Aadahl, as well as the Liberal Party MP Ludvig Kragtorp (1862–1928).⁵²⁷ Among the more or less self-declared anti-Semites were the author Nils Kjær and the lawyer and businessman Eivind Saxlund – the latter infamous for his anti-Semitic pamphlet *Jøder og Goyim* ('Jews and Goyim'), published some years earlier in 1910.⁵²⁸ Both the liberal newspaper *Dagbladet* and the labour organ *Social-Demokraten* were negative towards kosher slaughter, but less negative towards Norwegian Jews as such. Apart from printing letters from animal protectionists and reporting from the events, the largest newspaper in Kristiania, the conservative *Aftenposten*, took no official stance on the question. Nor did *Tidens Tegn*, a

⁵²⁴ I.e. the Mosaic Congregation [Det Mosaiske Trossamfund], today known in English as the Jewish Community of Oslo, and the Israelite Congregation [Den Israelittiske Menighed], which was merged with the Mosaic Congregation in 1939.

⁵²⁵ J[oseph] Siew: "Det jødiske barbari" in *Social-Demokraten*, 30.05.1913 and J[oseph] Siew: 'Schächtning' in *Social-Demokraten*, 10.06.1913. Siew had also contributed in *Social-Demokraten* in the debate following the publication of Eivind Saxlund's pamphlet *Jøder og Goyim* ('Jews and Goyim') in 1910/1911.

⁵²⁶ Halden 2007.

⁵²⁷ Kragtorp, a physician, was from 1913 also head of the government's school system for children with special needs [Abnormskolevæsen].

⁵²⁸ Saxlund 1910. The pamphlet was reprinted in at least three additional editions from 1911 to 1923, until Saxlund lost a defamation case against the journalist Paul Gjesdahl for accusations of anti-Semitism (see Christensen 1998).

newspaper associated with the Liberal Left Party,⁵²⁹ and the paper printed both the most supportive and negative letters.

An Anti-Semitic Turn?

The debate during the first half of 1913 in many ways culminated in an article in *Tidens Tegn* on May 31, 1913 by the author and literary critic Nils Kjær,⁵³⁰ an article that also caught much of the attention in Oskar Mendelsohn's brief review of press coverage that year.⁵³¹ The emphasis on Kjær was probably due to his fame as a man of letters, but also to the fact that Kjær was an outspoken anti-Semite.⁵³² Heavily inspired by Houston Steward Chamberlain, Kjær had in the years preceding the First World War turned away from the socialist and Marxist ideas of his youth and directed himself towards a reactionary nationalist ideology. In Kjær's new ideological outlook, anti-Semitism played a prominent role. Thus, Kjær's article marked not only the climax of intensity in the debate – with Kjær entering the stage, the professed anti-Semites also joined the debate for the first time.

As mentioned in earlier chapters, the animal protection movement, although accused by contemporaries of promoting anti-Semitism and racial hatred in its struggle against kosher slaughter, explicitly distanced itself from any such views. There is also little suggesting that the movement identified itself with anti-Semitic ideology, such as was the case with parts of the German animal protection movement. The cause itself, however, attracted the attention of anti-Semites such as Kjær and later Eivind Saxlund, and increasingly from the nationalist wing of the peasant movement through its newspaper *Landmandsposten*. Thus, the debate would from this point onwards be framed in an explicit anti-Semitic context. In this sense, Kjær's article contributed to a shift in the debate; however, Kjær in fact stated little that had not been said in the course of the debate since December 1912. In the following, Kjær's article will be the point of departure for an analysis of the various types of argumentation used in the debate.

⁵²⁹ The Liberal Left Party [Frisinnede Venstre] split from the Liberal Party in 1909, and the breakaway consisted mainly of conservative ex-members of the Liberal Party who collaborated mostly with the Conservatives. Incidentally, the remains of the Coalition party [Samlingspartiet], for which Ole Malm had been elected MP in 1907, also merged with the Liberal Left party in 1909.

⁵³⁰ Nils Kjær: 'Koscher' in *Tidens Tegn* 31.05.13: 'Our organism will react against the aliens when it starts to suffer from them'.

⁵³¹ Mendelsohn 1969, p. 572.

⁵³² Noreng 1995, esp. from p. 31; Lorenz 2011a, p. 40. See also his embracement of Saxlund's book *Jøder og Gojim*, where he publicly professed to be a follower of the 'Germanic anti-Semitism' (Christensen 1998, p. 84ff.).

To challenge the authority of experts invoked by Dr. Wilhelm Schencke in his defence of the Jewish slaughter method in a previous letter in *Tidens Tegn*, Kjær began his article by pointing out the existence of a prohibition of kosher slaughter in ‘the highly enlightened country’ of Switzerland.⁵³³ Kjær questioned the expertise further by stating that ‘If every so-called expert in the world came forward in a row, they would not be able to weaken the repulsive and disgusting impression kosher slaughter has on *non-Jews*’.⁵³⁴ By questioning scientific authority, Kjær repeated the distrust, well known from animal protectionist circles, concerning the objectivity of the experts and their ability to feel empathy with animals. In addition, Kjær implied that Jews had other standards of compassion than non-Jews, and that kosher slaughter was intolerable in ‘our’ society, because ‘we are not Jews and cannot be forced to feel or think like Jews’. The fact that this ‘brutal callousness’ had ‘a millennial tradition and relies on religious law’, did not make the case any better for Kjær. Thus, Kjær wanted not only to discredit the practice on the basis of its ancient origins, but also to bring into disrepute the Jewish religion itself, which he spoke of as ‘the religion that demands the slaughterhouses be transformed into stages for religious acts of sacrifice’.

The sole reason that Jews so far had not been met with more opposition in Norway was, according to Kjær, the relatively small size of the Norwegian Jewish community. Kjær predicted, however, that this would change with the immigration of Eastern European Jews, and it would become evident that Jews would demand further special rights and privileges that were contradictory and offensive to ‘our’ customs. Kjær painted a picture where Jews already were taking for themselves liberties beyond the religious freedom they had been granted in Norway: ‘If they in the name of tolerance demand respect for customs and activities that violate our moral consciousness, then they ask too much’. Kjær also warned against the superior position allowing kosher slaughter would give the Jews, who elsewhere in Europe were a ‘powerful and omnipresent enemy’,⁵³⁵ thus suggesting the existence of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy.

Three aspects of Kjær’s article sum up much of the agitation against kosher slaughter in these years. First, the issue was manipulated from being a question of practical means to being a question of civilisation, where the practice was attacked on its basis as part of a religious

⁵³³ Wilhelm Schencke: ‘Dyrebeskyttelse og jødeforfølgelse’ in *Tidens Tegn*, 17.05.1913.

⁵³⁴ Nils Kjær: ‘Koscher’ in *Tidens Tegn* 31.05.1913. My italics.

⁵³⁵ Nils Kjær: ‘Koscher’ in *Tidens Tegn* 31.05.1913.

ritual and Jews were being thought of as a people less concerned with animal suffering than Northern Europeans were. Secondly, the alleged demand for Jewish ‘privileges’ was a sign of Jewish attempts to control and influence Norwegian politics. Thirdly, Jews abused the generous rights they had obtained as strangers in the country.

Kosher Slaughter as a Question of Civilisation

A striking feature of Kjær’s article, and the debate overall, is the lack of argumentation concerning the presumed sufferings of the animals involved, despite the omnipresence of the animal protection movement in the debate. Sufferings were certainly mentioned, but to a lesser extent in connection with the cut than with the preparations before the cut.⁵³⁶ These preparations, however, were already being improved by the Mosaic Congregation and its *shochet* in order to satisfy veterinary authorities’ demands (Malm).⁵³⁷ This improvement did not, however, affect the debate much, and the fact that the Jewish method of religious slaughter *a priori* was considered inferior to the previous stunning methods, made deliberations concerning the degree of the animal’s sufferings superfluous in the opinion of animal protectionists. In comparison with ‘modern’ methods, the Jewish method would always be regarded as primitive, barbaric and irrational, and could not under any circumstances be tolerated as an aspect of the Jewish population’s religious freedom. On the contrary, the question’s religious dimension contributed to weakening the rationale for letting Jews maintain their slaughter practice.

As will be recalled from the previous chapters, the notion of kosher slaughter as a religious *ritual* had long been a major argument in the animal protection movement for abolishing kosher slaughter in Norway.⁵³⁸ According to the movement’s leading figure, Victor Nielsen-Sæther, a slaughter practice based on the commandments of an ancient religion could not possibly be valid when modern, rational methods existed: ‘It is possible that kosher slaughter, thousands of years ago, by contemporary standards, was a humane method of killing, but times have changed and so have fortunately also our demands for humane slaughter

⁵³⁶ Particularly the newspaper *Dagbladet* showed interest in this aspect of the case, for instance in articles on May 6 and 13, 1913 (‘Et grufuldt barbari. Jødisk slagting i Aker’; ‘Er schächtningen dyrplageri?’).

⁵³⁷ In his article in *Tidens Tegn* on May 17, 1913, Schencke confirmed that improvements were being made.

⁵³⁸ Schencke, as an expert on the Old Testament and Semitic cultures, repudiated the claim that the slaughter act in Jewish tradition constituted a ritual in itself, but that the slaughter prescriptions were a logical consequence of the biblical prohibition of the consumption of blood; see Wilhelm Schencke: ‘Schächtning’ in *Tidens Tegn*, 11.05.13.

methods'.⁵³⁹ The inspector of the Kristiania Animal Protection Association, Edvin Thorson, could, in a series of articles in the newspaper *Verdens Gang* on the subject 'Animal cruelty in its various forms in our days', inform that 'the Jews have practiced this kind of killing of animals for thousands of years without much opposition. Now it is time to 'prohibit this kind of treatment of animals',⁵⁴⁰ suggesting that Jews had been alone in slaughtering their animals in this way, when in fact traditional slaughter methods in Scandinavia and elsewhere in several ways resembled the Jewish practice, not least regarding the absence of previous stunning.

Proof of this ancient custom's incompatibility with 'modern' conditions was primarily found abroad, as the opponents claimed that kosher slaughter had been prohibited in several other 'civilised' countries. Victor Nielsen-Sæther reminded readers on numerous occasions that the practice was outlawed in Switzerland, Saxony and Finland, 'just as in all civilised countries, a strong movement has risen for the prohibition of kosher slaughter'.⁵⁴¹ Nielsen-Sæther of course omitted mentioning that by the end of 1912, both the Saxon and Finnish prohibitions had been lifted. When his opponents pointed out this fact, Nielsen-Sæther and other animal protectionists turned to experts statements from Germany, Sweden and Finland to prove that kosher slaughter from a scientific viewpoint was unacceptable in a civilised society.⁵⁴² This notion was challenged by Ole Malm and Wilhelm Schencke, claiming that the experts favoured by the animal protection movement in fact were not experts in the field of animal anatomy and physiology. They claimed that the 'true' experts in the field did not share the opinions of animal protectionists concerning kosher slaughter,⁵⁴³ and that such true experts were 'impartial men, elevated over the strife between Semites and anti-Semites'.⁵⁴⁴

Although animal protectionists themselves were lending credit to veterinary and medical experts from time to time, one of their main strategies in the campaign against the Jewish slaughter method as well as in other campaigns had been to question the validity of expert statements. The general notion was that scientific knowledge did not include the ability to feel

⁵³⁹ Victor Nielsen-Sæther: 'Dyrebeskyttelse og jødeforfølgelse' in *Tidens Tegn*, 28.05.1913.

⁵⁴⁰ E[dvin] Thorson: 'Dyrplageriet i dets forskjellige Former i vor Tid' in *Verdens Gang*, 12.03.1914. Apart from this article, the liberal *Verdens Gang* does not seem to have given much attention to the kosher slaughter affair.

⁵⁴¹ Victor Nielsen-Sæther: 'Schächtning' paa byens slagtehus' in *Aftenposten*, 31.12.1912.

⁵⁴² See minutes from the 1914 general assembly of the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania, printed in *Aftenposten*, *Tidens Tegn*, *Verdens Gang*, *Morgenbladet*, and *Social-Demokraten* on February 26, 1914.

⁵⁴³ Wilhelm Schencke: 'Dyrebeskyttelse og jødeforfølgelse' in *Tidens Tegn*, 17.05.1913 and Ole Malm: 'Dyrebeskyttelsen og schächtningen (III)' in *Aftenposten*, 24.02.1914.

⁵⁴⁴ Wilhelm Schencke: 'Naar "dyrevenner" driver agitation' in *Tidens Tegn*, 22.05.1913.

compassion for the animals, and stood in the way of a 'humane' approach to the issue. The animal protectionist Julie Ihlen admitted in a letter in *Landmandsposten* that the expertise certainly had its proper role, 'however, it must not become dominant and thus spread a chill that prevents progress'.⁵⁴⁵ The more outspoken inspector Thorsen challenged Malm's expertise more creatively:

Expertise here and expertise there. Malm has proven that he knows nothing of what he talks of. If master Malm himself got the choice between being slaughtered by the Jews or being shot, I would reckon he would stop his nonsense about the one method being equal to the other, and asked to be shot.⁵⁴⁶

Thorsen further claimed that 'All professional physiologists and vivisectionists are Malm's people'.⁵⁴⁷ Thus, the defence of shechita was also being coupled with the defence of vivisection, another important cause for animal protectionists in these years. The emphasis on the Jewish slaughter method's incompatibility with 'civilisation' on one side and the rejection of science on the other, constitutes an interesting paradox in the animal protectionists' rhetoric, and shows that the demand for prohibiting kosher slaughtering was not unambiguously a part of a mindset cultivating modern ideas.

Cruelty in the Jewish Religion

Shechita was rejected not only on the basis of being an *ancient* and *inhumane* custom – compared to modern methods, kosher slaughter was at its core crueler because of its background in the Jewish religion. As demonstrated in a previous chapter, Jews and their religion were perceived by animal protectionists as more brutal and cold-blooded towards animals than were Protestant Northern Europeans. These perceptions were now also disseminated outside animal protectionist circles, and appeared under different forms in all newspapers studied. The peasant movement organ *Landmandsposten* claimed in an editorial piece that

⁵⁴⁵ Julie Ihlen: 'Jødeslagtningen' in *Landmandsposten*, 21.02.1913.

⁵⁴⁶ 'Den jødiske slagtemåte. Slagtningen, sakkyndigheten, Schencke, Malm. Interview med inspektør Thorson' in *Social-Demokraten*, 04.06.1913. Thorson repeated this argument in his own words in *Verdens Gang*: E[dvin] Thorson: 'Dyrplageriet i dets forskjellige Former i vor Tid' in *Verdens Gang*, 12.03.1914.

⁵⁴⁷ *Verdens Gang*: E[dvin] Thorson: 'Dyrplageriet i dets forskjellige Former i vor Tid' in *Verdens Gang*, 12.03.1914.

The Jews have [...] a crippled commandment in their religion, which prohibits them from eating meat from animals slaughtered in a normal manner with stunning. Their pious teaching demands them to torment the animals to death.⁵⁴⁸

That the slaughter act was perceived as some kind of religious rite or ceremony purposely involving pain and suffering is evident from this passage, and the description also invoked memories of traditional slaughter methods practiced in Norway. These images were also referred to more implicitly when expressions such as ‘ritual killing’, ‘ritually killed’ or ‘ceremonial killing’ were applied. *Landmandsposten* spoke of a ‘religious service in the form of animal cruelty’,⁵⁴⁹ while *Social-Demokraten* under the headline ‘The Jewish Barbarity. Shall the atrocities continue in Aker?’ reported that in Hansen’s butchery in Aker, ‘this horrible religious animal abuse takes place twice a week’.⁵⁵⁰

It would also be tempting to relate these images to the ritual murder case against Mendel Beilis that took place the same year in Russia. However, the Beilis affair first became known to the Norwegian public during summer 1913, while most of the writings against kosher slaughtering appeared in newspapers during spring. Secondly, Norwegian newspapers denounced the accusations of ritual murder, and made the Russian authorities an object of ridicule in covering the affair.⁵⁵¹ Generally, the Norwegian press’s coverage of cases involving Jews was fairly balanced in the year preceding the First World War, only to deteriorate during the war and afterwards in the 1920s.⁵⁵² Thus, the kosher slaughtering affair in Kristiania and Aker was one of the first instances in the 20th century where anti-Semitic outbursts found a place in mainstream newspapers.

Noteworthy, however, is that *Social-Demokraten*, together with the two liberal newspapers (*Dagbladet* and *Tidens Tegn*), primarily blamed the Jewish *religion* on the grounds of its alleged backwardness, and not Jews themselves. Thus, these papers opened the possibility for ‘improvement’ of Jews and Judaism, and Jews were not regarded as immutable,⁵⁵³ an idea implicit in a statement found in an article in *Social-Demokraten*: ‘Even if Judaism seems not

⁵⁴⁸ ‘Dyrplageri’ in *Landmandsposten*, 06.01.1913.

⁵⁴⁹ ‘Dyrplageri’ in *Landmandsposten*, 06.01.1913.

⁵⁵⁰ ‘Det jødiske barbari. Skal grusomhetene fortsættes i Aker?’ in *Social-Demokraten*, 07.05.1913.

⁵⁵¹ See for instance *Morgenbladet* 06.07.1913 and 17.07.1913; *Aftenposten* 21.08.1913, 14.10.1913, and 29.10.1913.

⁵⁵² Mendelsohn 1969, p. 489.

⁵⁵³ A similar ambivalence towards Jews and notions of their potential ‘improvement’ was also present in the liberal and socialist press coverage of the Saxlund affair three years earlier; see Christensen 1998, p. 43ff. and p. 58ff.

to have surpassed the barbaric level *yet*, a civilised community should not tolerate the barbarity in its midst.’⁵⁵⁴ The liberal *Dagbladet* went further in not condemning Jews as such, by equating Jews and Christians: ‘However, systematic animal cruelty will as little as systematic animal sacrifice be tolerated by our people, neither by Jews nor Christians, regardless of how much they would invoke their rites’.⁵⁵⁵

Having defended Jews on other occasions (for instance in the Saxlund affair), *Dagbladet* maintained that it had nothing against Jews as such, but that it sought to put an end to the ‘incredible barbarity taking place in Jewish circles’. This custom was further understood as a tradition of superstition that had little to do with authentic Judaism. The paper claimed that ‘a number of Jews are themselves against this barbaric custom, which is not even prescribed in Scripture’. A few weeks later, the paper claimed that ‘It is not a part of the religious needs of the Jews to cause unnecessary pain for the slaughter animals’. The notion of kosher slaughter’s being an inauthentic part of Judaism, and thus open for change and improvement, was also shared by *Social-Demokraten*, who acknowledged Jews ‘the equal opportunity as any others to live from their professions and to worship their religion’. ‘However’, added the paper, ‘we are not able to comprehend why the preservation of kosher slaughter is a necessity’.⁵⁵⁶

In the animal protection movement, however, Jews themselves were increasingly viewed as fundamentally different from Norwegians when it came to compassion and brutality. In an interview in *Social-Demokraten*, the Kristiania association’s inspector, Edvin Thorson explained the ban on kosher slaughter in Kristiania by citing the ‘disgust it caused among ordinary people’, and asked rhetorically if ‘Jews really believe that it pleases God that they torment His creatures unnecessarily?’⁵⁵⁷ Victor Nielsen-Sæther had been more cautious in his characterisations of Jews; however, when dismissing Schencke’s accusations of anti-Semitism in the animal protection movement, Nielsen-Sæther simultaneously attacked Jews as he accused Schencke of resuming ‘the old tactic of Jews, namely to label the work of animal

⁵⁵⁴ ‘Det jødiske barbari. Skal grusomhetene fortsættes i Aker?’ in *Social-Demokraten*, 07.05.1913. My italics.

⁵⁵⁵ ‘Schächtningen ute og hjemme’ in *Dagbladet*, 22.05.1913.

⁵⁵⁶ ‘Den jødiske slagtemaate. Slagtningen, sakkyndigheten, Schencke, Malm. Interview med inspektør Thorson’ in *Social-Demokraten*, 04.06.1913.

⁵⁵⁷ ‘Den jødiske slagtemaate. Slagtningen, sakkyndigheten, Schencke, Malm. Interview med inspektør Thorson’ in *Social-Demokraten*, 04.06.1913.

protectionists against the gruesome kosher slaughter as persecution of Jews'.⁵⁵⁸ At this point, Nielsen-Sæther had already accused Schencke of being a Jew, and had claimed that 'It is characteristic that almost all those taking the lead in favour of kosher slaughter are either Jews themselves or of Jewish descent'.⁵⁵⁹ However, not only was Schencke the son of a Saxon Protestant stonemason and a Norwegian-born teacher and housewife⁵⁶⁰ – so far, not a single Norwegian Jew had publicly voiced his or her opinion in the kosher slaughter affair.⁵⁶¹ The belief in the minuscule Jewish population's ability to control the course of the affair through secret channels was also evident in *Landmandsposten*, where an editorial article claimed that 'We Norwegians are fortunately in the majority in this country, and this will always give [us] some influence, even if both capital and wisdom are remnants from king Solomon'.⁵⁶²

Abuse of Religious Freedom

Not only were Jews accused of having some kind of hidden power that could affect the outcome of the kosher slaughtering affair – they were also accused of being hypocrites who had no genuine interest in the religious aspect of the question, and of wanting only to acquire privileges for their own sake. The fact that not all Jews in Norway observed the dietary rules was used against the demand for kosher-slaughtered meat. In an interview with a waiter at a Kristiania restaurant in *Landmandsposten* with the title 'The Sacred Animal Abuse', the interviewer asked the waiter if Jews had any special demands regarding the meat, or if 'they take what they get?' The waiter responded negatively, while adding, 'They can be pretty devious. Some will only have it raw, while others hard roasted'.⁵⁶³ This was probably meant as proof of the excessive and ungrateful demands of Jews, who because of their seemingly unreasonable demands were accused of abusing the freedom of religion they had obtained in Norway.

The consequence of Jewish demands being perceived as offensive by Norwegians was obvious, according to Ludvig Kragtorp: 'If the Jews do not adapt, then there is no other way for Jews than to obey the law of nature, which assigns each existence to go where the

⁵⁵⁸ Victor Nielsen-Sæther: "'Dyrebeskyttelse og jødeforfølgelse". Svar til dr. Wilhelm Schencke' in *Tidens Tegn*, 28.05.1913.

⁵⁵⁹ Victor Nielsen-Sæther: 'Schächtning. Fra "Foreningen til dyrenes beskyttelse i Kristiania"' in *Tidens Tegn*, 17.05.1913.

⁵⁶⁰ Halden 2007, p. 65.

⁵⁶¹ Incidentally, this first occurred two weeks later, when letters by Joseph Siew were published in *Social-Demokraten*.

⁵⁶² 'Dyrplageri' in *Landmandsposten*, 06.01.1913.

⁵⁶³ 'Det hellige Dyrplageri' in *Landmandsposten*, 28.04.1913.

conditions for one's well-being are present'.⁵⁶⁴ The animal protection movement's representative, Inspector Thorson, put it more straightforwardly: 'Let them find themselves a Zion, where their manner to abuse animals will not cause any offense – there surely will not be any national mourning if they move away from us with their kosher slaughter.'⁵⁶⁵ However, the animal protectionist Thorson was bothered by not only the Jewish slaughter method. He also claimed that Jews also abused their rights in Norway in other spheres, as he in the same interview stated that Jews, 'With their innate ability of trade, thoroughly take advantage of our hospitality in this country'.⁵⁶⁶ Similarly, the lawyer and publisher of anti-Semitic books, Eivind Saxlund, claimed in *Landmandsposten* that Jews wished to obtain special privileges, such as their own slaughter method, only in order to remain isolated from the communities they lived in: 'The result is that they live separately in Ghettos'. The religious justification was dismissed as a superficial 'label' used to fool naïve Europeans, such as Malm, who were ardent supporters of religious freedom, and Saxlund questioned the authenticity of kosher slaughter in the Jewish religion. The result of Jews' insisting on kosher slaughtering was primarily that they obtained special rights 'that only have the purpose of removing themselves from the indigenous population'.⁵⁶⁷

Conclusion

Saxlund's article was like Kjær's article published long after the Aker police had decided to open a formal investigation against the Mosaic Congregation's trustee, and it is difficult to tell whether the Aker police were influenced by anti-Semitic agitators such as Kjær and Saxlund, or if these anti-Semitic excesses instead were brought about by the initiatives of the police. However, what is perhaps more interesting is that the agitation of the 'professed' anti-Semites did not differ markedly from what had been argued by animal protectionists and others through the press from Christmas 1912 and throughout the spring of 1913. The difference was rather that from now on, the agitation against kosher slaughter would inevitably be framed in an explicit anti-Semitic context. The different images and claims about Jews inherent in Kjær's article had in fact appeared under different forms and framings in various newspapers associated with most of the political spectrum. Thus, when the Aker police realised they

⁵⁶⁴ L[udvig] Kragtorp: 'Den jødiske slagtemaate. Svar til dr. Wilhelm Schencke' in *Tidens Tegn*, 21.05.1913.

⁵⁶⁵ 'Den jødiske slagtemaate. Slagtningen, sakkyndigheten, Schencke, Malm. Interview med inspektør Thorson' in *Social-Demokraten*, 04.06.1913.

⁵⁶⁶ 'Den jødiske slagtemaate. Slagtningen, sakkyndigheten, Schencke, Malm. Interview med inspektør Thorson' in *Social-Demokraten*, 04.06.1913.

⁵⁶⁷ E[ivind] Saxlund: 'Schächtningen som "religiøs akt"' in *Landmandsposten*, 30.04.1914.

would be unable to convict Grün for animal cruelty, and instead decided to pursue the matter through other means, their decision must have been built on the notion established in the public that ‘the slaughter method used by Jews is to a great extent offending against our common moral and concepts of civilisation’. In the press, this may be identified as the discourse that labelled kosher slaughter as contradictory to progress and civilisation on the grounds of its status as a religious practice, and the indignation over the Jewish population’s offensive demands to their ‘hosts’. Accordingly, as ‘guests’ in Norwegian society, their demands lacked legitimacy, and indulgences towards Jews would mean an intolerable civilisational step backwards.

Relieved that a court of justice had put an end to attempts to ban kosher slaughtering, the Jewish community was probably unaware of the legislative process that had been initiated by the prosecuting authorities. At any rate, the animal protection movement did not give up its struggle against the Jewish slaughtering method, sensing that whatever the outcome of the process against Grün would be, it would by no means put an end to the practice of shechita in Norway. Thus, a petition demanding a national prohibition of the use of non-stunning slaughter methods, including kosher slaughtering, was submitted to the Storting already in February 1914. However, the petition did not lead to any serious initiatives before well into the 1920s. The consequences of this initiative will be the theme for the last chapter in this section. The next chapter, on the other hand, will treat a brief interlude that took place in another part of the country, in the city of Trondheim, in 1919.

3.4: Trondheim 1919 – Tolerance, or the Lesser of Two Evils?

With the establishment of a public slaughterhouse in 1919 in Trondheim, Norway's third largest city and home to one of the country's three Jewish religious congregations, a new controversy over shechita erupted, similar to that in Kristiania six years earlier. Paradoxically, the prohibition in Kristiania and the process against Axel Grün in Aker were decisive factors for the decision *not* to introduce a similar prohibition in Trondheim, even though a prohibition would have been the preferred solution among some of the city's political leadership. In addition, the veterinary authorities' reluctance to consider shechita as animal cruelty further prevented city authorities from prohibiting shechita. Moreover, Trondheim's public debate never reached the proportions of the Kristiania and Aker debates during 1913 and 1914, and the character of the debate as well as the accommodating attitude of veterinary authorities suggest that Trondheim's Jews, to a greater extent than in Kristiania, were regarded as integrated citizens, and thus less likely objects for discriminatory measures.

The Establishment of the Trondheim Public Slaughterhouse

Unlike Kristiania, where city authorities and local veterinary authorities had played the leading role in establishing a public slaughterhouse, the initiative to establish a public slaughterhouse in Trondheim mainly originated in the butcher profession itself. The first proposal from some of the city's butchers appeared already in the early 1880s. In the 1890s, the animal protection movement joined butchers in their demand for a public slaughterhouse. The city physician [Stadsfysikus] supported the animal protection movement's proposal, however, on sanitary grounds rather than out of concern for the slaughter animals. With the city physician's support, municipal authorities decided to commence planning for a public slaughterhouse within the framework of the law on public slaughterhouses adopted by the Storting in 1892. Although a preparatory slaughterhouse committee was formed already in 1894, numerous obstacles prevented the realisation of the slaughterhouse, especially regarding its financing and localisation. A new committee was formed in 1909, and the following year, the city council decided to construct a public slaughterhouse on a harbour site (Brattøra). In 1915 the city council finally granted money for constructing the slaughterhouse, while also favouring introduction of compulsory slaughter as prescribed in the slaughterhouse

law of 1892.⁵⁶⁸ Compulsory slaughter for the city of Trondheim was approved by royal decree on March 8, 1916, and as from the opening of the public slaughterhouse at Brattøra on June 2, 1919,⁵⁶⁹ all slaughtering within the city borders would have to take place at the public slaughterhouse. From this date, all private slaughterhouses were also shut down in return for financial compensation – this was also the case with the slaughterhouse of the city’s Jewish community in Sandgaten.⁵⁷⁰

On October 17, 1918, the city council’s presidency had approved regulations for the slaughterhouse as proposed by the municipal veterinary Laukvik. Edvin Laukvik (1877–1947), a farmer’s son from Flatanger in Nord-Trøndelag County, who had been educated a veterinary at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural College in Copenhagen, had previously served as municipal veterinary in Kristiansund before he was appointed municipal veterinary in Trondheim in 1915. When the public slaughterhouse was established, Laukvik was also appointed slaughterhouse manager, and it was probably due to his experience as manager of the country’s first slaughterhouse in Kristiansund that he was offered the position as municipal veterinary in Trondheim. Interestingly, Laukvik was a Liberal Party member, and represented this party in the Trondheim city council for many years. In the 1930s and 40s Laukvik was also the leader of the Animal Protection Association of Trondheim, and was even rewarded the ‘highest distinction’ of the Federation of Norwegian Animal Protection Associations.⁵⁷¹

Despite his engagement in the animal protection movement, Laukvik did not refrain from acknowledging the problematic aspects of prohibiting shechita. While his proposal for the slaughterhouse regulations demanded that slaughter animals be stunned, it also included a paragraph that exempted butchers of the Mosaic Congregation from this requirement. Thus, Trondheim’s Jews were allowed to continue to practice shechita at the new public

⁵⁶⁸ A historical account of the establishment of the Trondheim public slaughterhouse can be found in ‘Beretning om Trondhjems slagtehus for aaret 1919’ in *Trondhjem kommunestyres forhandlinger aar 1920*. Vol. B, Trondhjem 1921, pp. 241–244.

⁵⁶⁹ The public slaughterhouse at Brattøra was in use until 1986, when it was replaced by a new facility on the city’s outskirts.

⁵⁷⁰ ‘Beretning om Trondhjems slagtehus for aaret 1919.’ in *Trondhjem kommunestyres forhandlinger aar 1920*. Vol. B, p. 245. Judging from the compensation the Mosaic Congregation received (4,000 kroners), the butchery was neither among the city’s largest nor among its smallest slaughterhouses.

⁵⁷¹ See 1910 census for Kristiansund, Obituary in *Aftenposten*, 23.04.1947 and Gierløff 1945, p. 104.

slaughterhouse.⁵⁷² In his presentation of the proposed regulations, veterinary Laukvik explained the reason for the exemption by citing the consequences of the Kristiania controversy in a few years earlier, namely that kosher slaughtering was conducted in a private suburban slaughterhouse, outside the city veterinary's jurisdiction:

With regard to kosher slaughter, one has, in my opinion, the choice between two evils – either kosher slaughtering just across the city border, or authorised kosher slaughtering under full control and with modern equipment at the slaughterhouse. I consider the latter the lesser [of the two].

Although Laukvik obviously regarded shechita as inferior to modern stunning methods, he did not refrain from informing the presidency that 'opinions are divided among impartial experts concerning whether kosher butchering can be regarded as animal cruelty'.⁵⁷³ In an interview in *Nidaros* on May 21, 1919 Laukvik elaborated his view:

Although it is true that kosher slaughtering is a method crueller than other slaughter methods, it cannot be regarded as more offensive to the public morality than the other methods to an extent that would necessitate limitations on the Jews' religious practice.

Thus, Laukvik repudiated the notion promoted by the Aker police and the Director of Public Prosecutions that shechita was offensive to the public morality. In the same interview, Laukvik also declared himself loyal to the notion of the late Ole Malm (Malm died in 1917), and reminded readers that kosher slaughter was allowed at the public slaughterhouses in Denmark, Sweden and elsewhere abroad. To accommodate shechita at the slaughterhouse while still taking the slaughter animals' welfare into account, Laukvik also made sure to install a device that would cast the animals in a less painful manner.⁵⁷⁴

Interestingly, Laukvik's stance on this question was shared by one of the senior butchers in Trondheim and member of the preparatory slaughterhouse committee, the German-born Friederich Bohne.⁵⁷⁵ Bohne had been the main proponent of establishing a public

⁵⁷² '§ 10. All animals slaughtered at the slaughterhouse must be stunned by shooting or a stroke on the forehead prior to the incision. [...] Ritual *schächting* conducted for the Mosaic Congregation in Trondheim is exempted from this.' Further in § 12: 'If the Mosaic Congregation wishes to have access to practice kosher slaughtering, it must acquire and use the equipment demanded by the slaughterhouse committee'. 'Beretning om Trondhjems slagtehus for aaret 1919' in *Trondhjem kommunestyres forhandlinger aar 1920*. Vol. B, Trondhjem 1921 p. 279.

⁵⁷³ Case No. B 147/1918, *Trondhjem kommunestyres forhandlinger aar 1918*. Trondhjem 1919, p. 632.

⁵⁷⁴ 'Schächtningen. En uttalelse av stadsdyrlæge Laukvik' in *Nidaros*, 21.05.1919.

⁵⁷⁵ The lawyer and conservative city council representative Johan Bruun was the third member of the committee, together with Laukvik and Bohne.

slaughterhouse since the 1880s, and was, as Laukvik was, a keen animal protectionist.⁵⁷⁶ By admitting already in 1918 that it would be more fortunate if shechita were conducted in the public slaughterhouse ‘where there are modern equipment and other protecting measures necessary for animals and humans’, Bohne’s view differed from both the official stance of Trondheim’s animal protection movement and that of the local butchers’ association. In opposition to Bohne, the leader of the Animal Protection Association of Trondheim, Olav Henmo,⁵⁷⁷ declared that he would not recommend that an ‘unacknowledged slaughter method as kosher butchering’ be allowed at the public slaughterhouse, where only ‘slaughter methods that in the public’s opinion are regarded as humane’ should be allowed.⁵⁷⁸ At the convention of the Butchers’ Association of Norway in 1920, Bohne maintained his position that shechita under the right circumstances should be tolerated, stating that ‘kosher butchering *can* be performed in a responsible manner’.⁵⁷⁹

Despite protests from animal protectionists and the local butchers’ association, there seems to have been little opposition to Laukvik’s proposal in the Trondheim City Council. Although no official records of the minutes of the negotiations in the Trondheim Presidency exist for this period, there are no indications that Laukvik’s proposal for allowing shechita caused any discussion among the representatives.⁵⁸⁰ As in Kristiania, specified slaughterhouse regulations were formulated by the presidency alone, and did not need the city council’s approval. However, unlike the Kristiania City Council, where Ole Malm nevertheless had brought up the issue for discussion, the issue was addressed neither during the 1915 debate on establishing the slaughterhouse⁵⁸¹ nor during the 1918 debate concerning taxes imposed on slaughterhouse users.⁵⁸² Although Laukvik’s proposal seemingly went smoothly through the city’s governing bodies, one of the institutions consulted in advance had objections to

⁵⁷⁶ Christian Philip Friderich Bohne (1853–1923) immigrated to Trondheim in 1879 from Wolferstedt in Saxony-Anhalt, and soon after set up a butcher shop in Trondheim. Bohne had in 1912 been a board member of the Animal Protection Association in Trondheim since 1887 (Brinchmann & Daae 1912, p. 29).

⁵⁷⁷ According to the 1910 census, Henmo (born 1874) was a primary school teacher.

⁵⁷⁸ ‘Schächtning’ in *Tidsskrift for Slagtere og Pølsemake*, No. 2, 1918, p. 13.

⁵⁷⁹ ‘Landsmøtet 1920’ in *Tidsskrift for Slagtere & Pølsemake*, No. 8, 1920, p. 59.

⁵⁸⁰ Although no official minutes were taken for meetings in the presidency and the city council, the local newspapers usually published extensive minutes from the most important cases. Even though there were restrictions on publicly referring to the negotiations in the presidency, the socialist newspaper *Ny Tid* aroused some controversy the same year by referring to discussions in closed sessions of the presidency. However, no mention of the slaughterhouse case is found in the newspapers’ published minutes of the open council meetings, nor in *Ny Tid*’s ‘illicit’ minutes from the presidency.

⁵⁸¹ See for instance *Trondhjems Adresseavis*, *Dagsposten*, *Nidaros* or *Ny Tid* on 03.12.1915.

⁵⁸² See for instance *Trondhjems Adresseavis*, *Dagsposten*, *Nidaros* or *Ny Tid* on 02.11.1918.

allowing shechita. In a letter of June 5, 1918, the Trondheim Association of Master Butchers expressed that it wished omitted the paragraph exempting the Mosaic Congregation from the requirement of previous stunning.⁵⁸³ However, the Ministry of Agriculture and the new head of the Ministry's Veterinary Office, Halvor Horne, had no objections to allowing shechita at the new slaughterhouse.⁵⁸⁴

A Failed Intervention

Thus, everything seemed settled with regard to shechita when the public slaughterhouse was to be inaugurated on June 2, 1919. However, some weeks in advance, Trondheim's animal protection movement attempted to make the presidency reconsider the permission granted to the Mosaic Congregation. In Trondheim's leading Liberal Party newspaper at the time, *Nidaros*, the former Liberal Party city council member, women's rights activist and animal protectionist Antonie Løchen (1850–1933) attacked the presidency fiercely for allowing shechita at the slaughterhouse. Løchen's article mainly consisted of excerpts from statements negative to allowing shechita at the Kristiania slaughterhouse in 1913, as the submitter claimed she had reason to believe that 'very few or perhaps none of the presidency's members have witnessed kosher slaughtering', and that the presidency might change their mind if they had knowledge about the realities.⁵⁸⁵

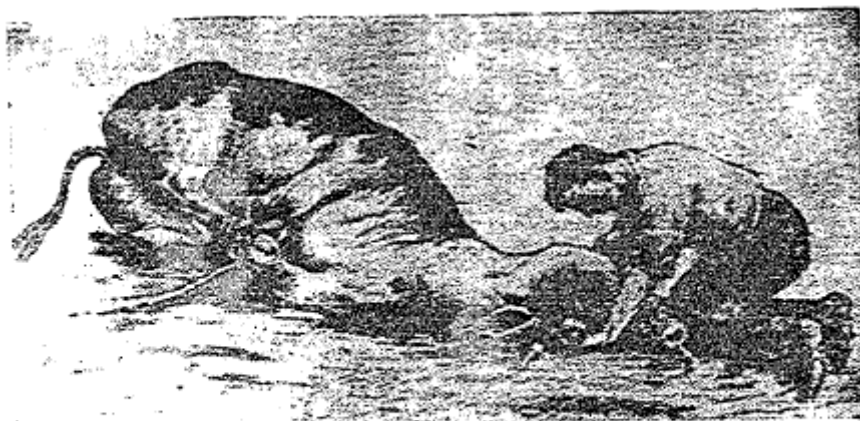
The article was illustrated with a cliché, much used in the animal protection movement's periodicals, showing a cow lying on its side with its feet tied together and a man pushing its head against the ground to expose its throat. Although the animal's position probably was realistic enough, the caption did not correspond entirely to the reality of shechita: 'The animal's position prior to kosher slaughtering. Notice how the assistant causes the animal tremendous pain sticking his thumbs into the eye sockets and pushing the eyeball in order to keep the animal calm'. This alleged technique had never been mentioned in the reports from the Kristiania controversy, or in the animal protection movement's journals.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸³ Appendix No. 1, case No. B 147/1918, *Trondhjem kommunestyres forhandlinger aar 1918*. Trondhjem 1919, p. 636. The letter was signed by the chairman of the association, Joh. O. Helgesen.

⁵⁸⁴ Appendix No. 3, case No. B 147/1918, *Trondhjem kommunestyres forhandlinger aar 1918*. Trondhjem 1919, p. 637.

⁵⁸⁵ Antonie Løchen: 'Skal schächtning tillates i Trondhjems slagtehus?' in *Nidaros*, 20.05.1919.

⁵⁸⁶ Antonie Løchen quoted the reports of Thorsen, Hirsch, Marum, and Nielsen-Sæther printed in the May 1913 issue of *Dyrenes Ven*. None of these mention the practice of forcing the animal's head down by pressing its eyeballs.



Dyrets stilling for schächtning. Bemerk hvorledes medhjælperen for at holde dyret stille, med tommelfingrene forårsaker dyret voldsomme smerter ved at stikke dem ind i øienhulene og presse paa øieplet.

Although municipal veterinary Laukvik did not see any problems of principle in allowing shechita at the slaughterhouse, he yielded to Antonie Løchen's demand that the Jewish slaughter method be demonstrated at the slaughterhouse before a committee consisting of members of the animal protection movement and the supervising committee of the slaughterhouse.⁵⁸⁷ Although the committee was composed of representatives of organisations that initially were *negative* to shechita, the committee basically concluded as Laukvik did in his proposal to the regulations for the public slaughterhouse. After having viewed a comparison of shechita and slaughtering with stunning at the public slaughterhouse on August 15, 1919, the committee concluded that since it took over three minutes from the incision until the animal was unconscious, shechita should be regarded as an outdated and inadvisable method. However, since the consequence of prohibiting shechita at the slaughterhouse would be that the Jewish community would begin using a private butchery outside the city borders (as had happened in Kristiania/Aker), and since the new slaughterhouse had been adapted to accommodate shechita in the best possible manner, the committee recommended 'for the time being' that the Jewish community should still be allowed to slaughter at the public slaughterhouse.⁵⁸⁸

Although the animal protection movement's attempt to intervene in a political decision may have seemed fruitless, the initial article in *Nidaros* by Antonie Løchen gave impetus to a

⁵⁸⁷ 'Schächtningen' in *Nidaros*, 23.05.1919. The committee appointed by the presidency consisted of Friederich Bohne, Holm Birger Holmsen (an engineer), Ole Halvorsen (a butcher), Henrik Ouren (a physician), Olaus Morseth (a veterinary), and Marius Lie (a butcher).

⁵⁸⁸ The report was printed in several newspapers and journals, among others, in *Nidaros* 03.09.1919.

lengthy debate in the same newspaper. However, not much was said in the exchange of opinions in *Nidaros* that had not already been uttered in the Kristiania and Aker controversies. In fact, essentially the same articles or excerpts from the debates in Kristiania and Aker five years earlier were quoted. What is perhaps most remarkable about the Trondheim controversy is the strong Jewish presence. Whereas the two Jewish congregations in Kristiania had remained silent during the controversies in Kristiania and Aker in 1913 and 1914, respectively,⁵⁸⁹ the chairman of the Trondheim Mosaic Congregation, Bernhard S. Dworsky,⁵⁹⁰ did not hesitate to express the Jewish community's opinions on the attempts to exclude shechita from the public slaughterhouse. In a confident tone, Dworsky opposed Antonie Løchen's claims about the casting of the animals, as well as other inaccuracies in her article. He also emphasised the love for animals inherent in Judaism, and quoted several biblical passages, claiming that in fact, Jews had been the first animal protectionists. Dworsky also quoted Laukvik's predecessor Per Tuff,⁵⁹¹ who had said to *Nidaros* that 'one should as an outsider not quite blindly condemn Jews for their slaughter method, as this is highly contested even among the most learned scholars'.⁵⁹² The notion of Jewish love for animals was obviously incomprehensible to Antonie Løchen, who in a reply dismissed this idea as Jewish propaganda, and declared that she would refrain from further discussions with Dworsky.⁵⁹³

Instead, Victor Nielsen-Sæther of the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania engaged in the debate. Dworsky had quoted Nielsen-Sæther in one of his letters to *Nidaros*, and Nielsen-Sæther responded shortly after with arguments and accusations well known from the Kristiania and Aker controversies. Although the court in Aker had determined that shechita could not be regarded as animal cruelty in the sense of the penal code, Nielsen-Sæther nevertheless concluded that shechita was 'on the verge of being a criminal offense'.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁸⁹ As will be recalled from the previous chapter, the merchant and former yeshiva student Josef Siew was the only Jew who raised his voice publicly during the process against Axel Grün.

⁵⁹⁰ Bernhard Selig Dworsky (1888–1960), was the first chairman of the Trondheim Mosaic Congregation born in Trondheim, and despite his relatively young age, he became chairman of the Congregation already during the First World War, in 1917 (see Mendelsohn 1969, p. 373 and p. 483).

⁵⁹¹ Per Tuff (1878–1966) had been instrumental in establishing the public slaughterhouse in Trondheim; however, he left his position as municipal veterinary in 1914 when he was appointed professor at the Norwegian School of Agriculture [Norges Landbrukshøgskole]. Tuff was also among the veterinaries who signed a petition in July 1926 acknowledging that shechita 'plays a very important role for many serious and honest men and women's religious beliefs' (printed in *Aftenposten*, 02.07.1926).

⁵⁹² Bernh[ard] S[elig] Dworsky: 'Schächtning' in *Nidaros*, 24.05.1919. Unfortunately, Dworsky did not provide any detailed reference to Tuff's statement.

⁵⁹³ Antonie Løchen: 'Schächtningen' in *Nidaros*, 28.05.1919.

⁵⁹⁴ Victor Nielsen-Sæther: 'Schächtning' in *Nidaros*, 21.06.1919.

Likewise, he dismissed the expert statements from the process against Axel Grün by referring to German veterinaries negative to shechita. However, similar to the debate five years earlier, the physiological aspects of shechita compared to slaughtering with previous stunning never became the main issue of the debate. Instead, the debate was characterised by the question of civilisation, where the animal protectionists (Løchen and Nielsen-Sæther) argued that shechita belonged to the past, and therefore should be prohibited. Løchen also pointed to prohibitions against shechita in other ‘civilised’ countries,⁵⁹⁵ while Nielsen-Sæther – well aware that most of these prohibitions had been lifted years ago – emphasised the incompatibility of shechita with a modern slaughterhouse. Further, he pointed out that Norway, with Scandinavia’s oldest animal protection movement, should also with regard to slaughtering take the lead in improving animal welfare.⁵⁹⁶ Again, the animal protectionists also made use of the ‘ritual’ aspect of shechita as a counter concept to reason and civilisation, and the Jewish slaughter method was labelled as ‘barbaric’, ‘cruel’, etc.

A Jewish Conspiracy?

Although most arguments for and against shechita were identical to those five years earlier, the criticism of the Norwegian Jewish community was considerably sharpened, and the notion of a Jewish conspiracy gained importance among animal protectionists. The criticism of Norwegian Jews in the Kristiania and Aker controversies had mainly consisted of accusations of hypocrisy among Jews (‘Jews do not follow their own dietary laws’), claims that shechita was not an authentic part of Judaism, and consequently accusations about abuse of religious freedom (‘they want exemptions and privileges for their own sake’). These accusations certainly echoed in the Trondheim controversy;⁵⁹⁷ however, what is most striking about the Trondheim controversy are the accusations implying a notion of a Jewish conspiracy against the opponents of shechita. Such accusations had been stated only implicitly by Victor Nielsen-Sæther five years earlier when he had claimed that all proponents of shechita were either Jewish or of Jewish descent.⁵⁹⁸ Now the accusations of a Jewish conspiracy became more explicit. After Bernhard Dworsky had mentioned the lifting of the Saxon prohibition of

⁵⁹⁵ See letters in *Nidaros* 20.05.1919 and 22.05.1919.

⁵⁹⁶ Victor Nielsen-Sæther: ‘Schächtning’ in *Nidaros*, 03.07.1919.

⁵⁹⁷ See for instance Nielsen-Sæther in *Nidaros* 21.06.1919: ‘What I do not understand is how the descendants of this noble people [the ancient Jews] have become so different and always resist when progress is being made’. See also Nielsen-Sæther’s letter in *Nidaros* 10.06.1919.

⁵⁹⁸ Victor Nielsen-Sæther: ‘Schächtning. Fra “Foreningen til dyrenes beskyttelse i Kristiania”’ in *Tidens Tegn*, 17.05.1913.

shechita, Antonie Løchen wrote that ‘this did not happen because the perception of kosher slaughter had changed, but because Jews used their great political influence’.⁵⁹⁹

Nielsen-Sæther was initially more cautious, and explained that shechita was tolerated at slaughterhouses abroad thanks to the Jewish ‘insistence’ on preserving their religious ritual.⁶⁰⁰ Reading between the lines, Bernhard Dworsky pointed out the absurdity of Nielsen-Sæther’s insinuations against Jews, and accused him for ‘playing on the strings of the public’s sympathy’, which according to Dworsky was ‘always easy to obtain’. In his reply, Nielsen-Sæther claimed that ‘The Animal Protection of Kristiania wishes the Jews all the best. I dare to claim that there hardly exists a single anti-Semite in our association’.⁶⁰¹ However, from a later letter to *Nidaros*, it becomes clear what Nielsen-Sæther meant by Jewish ‘insistence’ in his letter of June 10:

Our animal protection association is the oldest in the Scandinavian countries, and Norway should be the first of these countries to entirely prohibit kosher slaughter before the Jews also here in this country gain sufficient power to prevent this.⁶⁰²

Thereby Nielsen-Sæther not only revealed his belief in Jewish manipulation as the cause of the lifting of anti-shechita legislation in other countries – he also suggested that Jewish influence was increasing in Norway, and that a prohibition of shechita would have to preempt the rise of Jewish power in Norway. Nielsen-Sæther feared a similar course of events in Norway as in Finland, and referred to a lecture held by the Finnish animal protectionist Agnes von Konow, in which she had described ‘the efforts of Jews and the paths they have followed to reintroduce kosher slaughter in Finland, and likewise a decision made by the Senate in favour of Jews’.⁶⁰³

But Nielsen-Sæther and other animal protectionists had hardly only Finland in their minds when they suggested that Jews might be able to manipulate the outcome of the struggles to prohibit shechita. At least since the publication of the first edition of Saxlund’s book *Jøder og Gojim* (‘Jews and goyim’) in 1910, the notion of a Jewish world conspiracy had gained supporters in the Norwegian public. With the outbreak of the First World War, suspicions against Jews grew not only in the public, but also among authorities and even among some

⁵⁹⁹ Antonie Løchen: ‘Schächtningen’ in *Nidaros*, 28.05.1919.

⁶⁰⁰ Victor Nielsen-Sæther: ‘Schächtning’ in *Nidaros*, 10.06.1919.

⁶⁰¹ Victor Nielsen-Sæther: ‘Schächtning’ in *Nidaros*, 21.06.1919.

⁶⁰² Victor Nielsen-Sæther: ‘Schächtning’ in *Nidaros*, 03.07.1919.

⁶⁰³ Victor Nielsen-Sæther: ‘Schächtning’ in *Nidaros*, 11.07.1919.

cabinet members. Jewish travelling salesmen were suspected of being spies for the belligerents (Norway remained neutral),⁶⁰⁴ and the revolution in Russia stirred up the fear of 'Bolshevik Jews'. One of the most prominent contributions in the public debate was an article by the painter Anders Castus Svarstad (1869–1943) in the prestigious political and literary magazine *Samtiden* in 1918. The conservative and anti-modernist painter Svarstad had gained some fame among his contemporaries both for his paintings and his writings. For later generations he is perhaps best known for his marriage to the author Sigird Undset.

According to Svarstad, the revolution in Russia was organised by Jews as 'revenge' for centuries of oppression. Jews stood behind burnings, violence and killings, and their goal was the 'destruction of everything European culture has built and created'.⁶⁰⁵ According to Svarstad's bizarre theory, Russian Jews acted on behalf of the Prussians, who because of their close kinship with Jews (Svarstad dubbed Prussians 'Neo-Semites') used Jews all over Europe as tools for creating a German empire.⁶⁰⁶ Besides these grand conspiracy theories, Svarstad also used a slaughter metaphor in his description of the Russian Jews, a metaphor worth noting. Svarstad coupled Shakespeare's character Shylock from the 'Merchant of Venice' with an explicit description of a slaughtering act. After the ravages caused by the revolution,

No one could any longer refuse Shylock to cut out the six pounds of meat from his debtor, his living victim. And Shylock uses his knife – we are watching it and listening to the victim moaning. And the act of vengeance fills his heart with delight and his mouth with fluids, the water flows from his teeth and his immensely thick lips becomes wet and shiny from lust.

Excerpts of Svarstads highly anti-Semitic article were also reprinted in several newspapers, and especially the liberal-conservative *Tidens Tegn* also published other pieces on the alleged Jewish control of the Russian Revolution.⁶⁰⁷

However, the anti-Semitic utterances in the public during and immediately after the Great War should not be overestimated, and it was first in the 1920s that such expressions became commonplace in the Norwegian public. Still, the occurrence of such statements in mainstream media was something new during the Great War, and constituted a base of resonance for the

⁶⁰⁴ Johansen 1984, p. 20.

⁶⁰⁵ Svarstad 1918, No. 5, p. 305. See also Lorenz 2011a, p. 40.

⁶⁰⁶ Svarstad 1918, No. 5, p. 307.

⁶⁰⁷ Mendelsohn 1969, p. 490.

animal protectionists' allegations against Jews. Whether the animal protectionists themselves believed that there existed a Jewish conspiracy, secretly manipulating the authorities in order to maintain shechita, is far from certain. However, by using the public's perception of a Jewish conspiracy in their agitation, animal protectionists could obtain further sympathy among individuals and groups that were not necessarily concerned with animal welfare.

'Our animals' and Jewish Butchers

A second new feature with the shechita controversy in Trondheim was the presence of letters in newspapers submitted by farmers. Although the nationwide peasant-movement newspaper *Nationen*, which in 1918 with Thorvald Aadahl still as editor had succeeded *Landmandsposten* as the main organ of the Norwegian Peasant's Association [Norges Landmandsforbund], did not engage in the Trondheim controversy, the farmers' opinions certainly echoed those expressed some years earlier in *Landmandsposten*. Letters published in *Nidaros* from farmers in neighbouring rural districts expressed concern for leaving 'our' farm animals in the hands of Jewish butchers. One farmer demanded some kind of guarantee that his animal would not be resold to Jews by the slaughterhouse,⁶⁰⁸ while another suggested that farmers would be 'unwilling to deliver their animals to that kind of killing' and would boycott the new slaughterhouse if shechita were allowed.⁶⁰⁹

With 'our', these farmers did not necessarily refer to their own animals, but to animals belonging to a kind of imagined collective of Norwegian farmers and consumers. Indeed, this imagined collective stretched beyond the letters submitted by farmers in Trøndelag, and also appeared in the animal protectionists' writings. For instance, Victor Nielsen-Sæther repeatedly referred to *our* animals,⁶¹⁰ while an anonymous submitter concluded that 'Yes, animals feel like humans do, and such treatment of *its* animals is not worthy of a Christian, humane nation'.⁶¹¹ From this rhetoric, one may conclude that farmers and animal protectionists engaging in the debate did not regard Jews as members of this collective in any sense. However, to what extent was this the case among Trondheim city authorities? In the following paragraphs, it will be suggested that the Trondheim controversy in several ways

⁶⁰⁸ 'O. E.': 'Schächtningen' in *Nidaros*, 07.07.1919.

⁶⁰⁹ K[arl] Aarnseth: 'Schächtningen' in *Nidaros*, 16.06.1919. The submitter Karl Magnus Aarnseth (1888–1964) was a farmer in the neighbouring rural district Leinstrand in Melhus parish.

⁶¹⁰ For instance in *Nidaros*, 10.06.1919, Nielsen-Sæther stated that he wrote, 'On behalf of all those who prefer that *our* domestic animals not be subjected to unnecessary pain and fear'. My italics.

⁶¹¹ 'Frido': 'Schächtningen' in *Nidaros*, 05.06.1919. My italics.

differed from the Kristiania and Aker controversies. Not only local authorities' reactions differed remarkably – the Trondheim press seemingly regarded the city's Jews as fellow citizens to a greater extent than the capital's press regarded Kristiania Jews as fellow citizens. Although farmers from rural districts outside Trondheim protested, public opinion against Jews had proved to be far more difficult to establish among citizens than in the capital five years earlier, and opponents of shechita were dependent on support from the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania.

Acceptance, or Tolerance 'for the Time Being'?

Apart from the explicit anti-Semitic outbursts of the animal protection movement, it is perhaps not the debate in itself that is the most interesting feature of the brief controversy on shechita in Trondheim during summer 1919, but rather *where* it took place. It is noteworthy that apart from *Nidaros*, none of the other newspapers – each of which was associated with a different political party – paid any attention to the question of allowing shechita at the public slaughterhouse. The only exception was the socialist daily *Ny Tid*, which with reference to Antonie Løchen sarcastically remarked the surprising ability of an 'elderly woman to write such an amount about slaughtering and the slaughterhouse as she does'.⁶¹² The author of the article did not attempt to hide the fact that this woman was not just 'anyone' in Trondheim's public life. Not only was she the wife of the mayor Olaf Løchen,⁶¹³ but her writings also appeared in Trondheim's leading newspaper at the time, the Liberal Party daily *Nidaros*.⁶¹⁴ This was hardly coincidental, given Løchen's political affiliation. In addition, *Nidaros* had been founded by her brother Haakon Løken (1859–1923) in 1902, who also had edited the paper until 1910.

Although the insinuations of the socialist paper may seem exaggerated, there is no doubt that Antonie Løchen and her family had exercised a considerable amount of influence in politics and public life in Trondheim around the turn of the century, especially in Liberal Party circles. Antonie Løchen herself, as well as her brother Haakon, her husband Olaf – who also was her first cousin – and another cousin, Olaf's brother Hjalmar (1852–1932), had all represented the Liberal Party in the Trondheim City Council. The men in the family were all educated lawyers and held high positions in the civil service. Hjalmar Løken had been the editor of the

⁶¹² Kristian Husmand [pseud.]: 'Trondhjems kommunale slagtehus' in *Ny Tid*, 02.06.1919.

⁶¹³ Olaf Løchen (1848–1920) served as executive mayor from 1900 until his death in 1920.

⁶¹⁴ *Nidaros* had in this period a circulation of between 20,000 and 30,000 issues (Flo 2010, p. 234).

then Liberal newspaper *Dagsposten* in the 1880s, while his cousin Haakon led the breakaway from the same newspaper, which resulted in the founding of *Nidaros* in 1902.⁶¹⁵ Antonie was also among the founders of the women's rights movement in Trondheim in 1885, and was one of its first leaders.⁶¹⁶

By the beginning of the 1920s, the aging Løchen clan's influence had probably shrunk enough to make Antonie Løchen an object of ridicule, or at best ignorance. Her strong connection to *Nidaros* is most likely the reason why only this newspaper printed letters opposing shechita at the public slaughterhouse. Although *Nidaros* printed Løchen's articles, the newspaper itself was not necessarily any more hostile towards Jews than other newspapers were. On the contrary, the paper's founder, Antonie Løchen's brother Haakon Løken, had already in the 1890s been a warm supporter of Trondheim's Jewish community, and had helped many Jewish immigrants with their applications for citizenship.⁶¹⁷ Unlike Kristiania newspapers, neither the socialist *Ny Tid*, the liberal-conservative *Dagsposten*, nor the conservative *Adresseavisen* paid much attention to the issue. Taking into account the numerous attacks on Kristiania's Jews in 1913/1914, in Liberal, Conservative and Socialist newspapers, the lack of interest from Trondheim newspapers becomes conspicuous. Likewise, the slaughterhouse committee's willingness to accommodate kosher slaughtering at the new slaughterhouse suggests a much weaker opposition to shechita in Trondheim than in Kristiania. Although the Association of Master Butchers protested against the exemption allowing shechita in the new slaughterhouse, the city's most senior butcher, Friederich Bohne, defended together with slaughterhouse manager Laukvik the Jewish community's right to practice religious slaughter at the slaughterhouse.

Although somewhat misguided, later correspondence between Laukvik and the Mosaic Congregation confirms Laukvik's will to find a solution that also would satisfy the Jewish community. In a 1921 letter to the Mosaic Congregation, Laukvik suggested a 'modification' to the Jewish slaughter method that he believed once and for all would 'eliminate all opposition to kosher butchering'. Under the false conception that shechita's main purpose was to 'provoke the best possible bleeding, regardless of whether the animal is conscious',

⁶¹⁵ *Nidaros* later became the official organ of the Liberal Party in Trondheim after *Dagsposten* had turned to the more conservative breakaway Liberal Left Party in 1909.

⁶¹⁶ Mona 2004, p. 68.

⁶¹⁷ Reitan 2005, p. 63. Incidentally, Løken also knew Ole Malm, with whom he had been a board member of the Student Society in Kristiania in 1881 (Wallem 1916, vol. 2, p. 771).

Laukvik suggested that the incision could be done immediately after a blow causing temporary unconsciousness. Making the animal only faint, the procedure would not have any consequences for the animal's cardiac activities, and thus not effect the bleeding.⁶¹⁸ The Mosaic Congregation's response is not to be found either in the public slaughterhouse's archives or in that of the Mosaic Congregation. However, having in mind that Laukvik's proposal was based on a flawed perception of the intention and meaning of shechita, there is little reason to believe that the congregation's response to Laukvik's proposal would have been anything other than negative. Still, nothing further was done in the matter, and Trondheim's Jews were allowed to practice shechita uninterrupted at the public slaughterhouse until the national prohibition came into force on January 1, 1930.⁶¹⁹

Another fact that supports the notion of Trondheim as more accommodating towards the Jewish community than was Kristiania is the strong presence of Mosaic Congregation's chairman in the columns of *Nidaros*. First, this presence tells us that editors of *Nidaros* did not necessarily agree with opponents of shechita, but rather remained neutral regarding this issue.⁶²⁰ However, more striking is Bernhard Dworsky's bold tone, which probably would have been unthinkable in Kristiania newspapers in this period. As some scholars have remarked, Kristiania's Mosaic Congregation had always been cautious in the public debate in accordance with its strategy of 'cautious integration'.⁶²¹ Several Kristiania newspapers printed anti-Semitic articles in the years during and immediately after the Great War, especially related to the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.⁶²² Several were met with criticism from the Mosaic Congregation; however, only in Trondheim did the congregation engage in more thorough polemics. The congregation's representatives were involved in polemics in other debates besides the kosher slaughter debate. The same year, the congregation's trustee [forstander] Samuel Brandhändler (1877–1949) participated in a lengthy debate in the

⁶¹⁸ The Trøndelag Intermunicipal Archives, Trondheim kommune, Slaktehuset, Ba: Kopibøker, Kopibok 1919–1921, p. 317. Letter dated 12.01.1921.

⁶¹⁹ As late as in 1932, Laukvik inquired about giving the Jewish community permission to slaughter chickens at a poultry slaughterhouse in Trondheim (Trondheim Eggcentral), using a combination of shechita and the stunning method (the chicken's neck was cut by the shochet, followed immediately by beheading). Laukvik's inquiry was, however, dismissed by the head of the Veterinary Authority, Niels Thorshaug, with reference to the new slaughter law's unconditional demand for previous stunning. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 103.

⁶²⁰ Unlike the Kristiania and Aker controversies, the editorials never brought up the issue. Dworsky had letters in print in *Nidaros* in the following editions: 24.05.1919, 31.05.1919 (responses to Antonie Løchen), 13.06.1919, 26.06.1919, and 01.07.1919 (polemics with Victor Nielsen-Sæther).

⁶²¹ Gjernes 2007, p. 233. See also Kjeldstadli 2003, p. 411f.

⁶²² Mendelsohn 1969, p. 488.

Trondheim newspapers *Adresseavisen* and *Dagsposten*, with Trondheim's Catholic vicar Célestin Riesterer, concerning the Catholic Church's attitudes towards pogroms in Poland the previous year.⁶²³

The Jewish community's visibility in newspaper columns and public life, as well as the fact that Trondheim was a much smaller city than Kristiania, may have prevented the emergence of a similar 'public opinion' that had convinced Kristiania's politicians to exclude shechita from the public slaughterhouse. Also noteworthy is that most of the submitters to *Nidaros* who were negative to shechita were either farmers from surrounding rural districts or animal protectionists from Kristiania. In addition to the rhetoric well known from the controversies in 1913–1914, the increasing accusations in wake of the First World War of Jewish conspiracies constituted a powerful tool, which animal protectionists used when they suggested that Jews were able to manipulate legislators to prevent the prohibition of kosher slaughter. The accusations of undue influence and manipulation were also to dominate the debate in 1927, when the issue was first addressed in the Storting. However, the next chapter will look into the consequences of the initiative taken by the Aker police and Director of Public Prosecutions in 1914 to establish legislation intended to enforce a national prohibition of kosher slaughter.

⁶²³ The following year, Brandhändler also debated with a person who had submitted three letters to *Dagsposten* on the subject 'Socialism and Judaism' (Mendelsohn 1969, p. 493).

3.5: Political Pressure and Bureaucratic Resistance: The Slaughter Ordinance in the Ministry of Agriculture 1914–1925

On December 11, 1925, the Ministry of Agriculture accidentally issued a press release, stating that the Council of State, in its meeting the same day, had by royal decree⁶²⁴ approved an ordinance,⁶²⁵ with provisions for the slaughtering of animals, provisions that would prohibit shechita in Norway from December 15. Oskar Mendelsohn writes that ‘It was with great dismay’ that Norwegian Jews learned about this event in the newspapers the same day as it allegedly had been approved by the cabinet.⁶²⁶ Although Norwegian Jews could not have been completely unaware that the Ministry of Agriculture had been considering the issue for some time,⁶²⁷ they could hardly have expected that after almost ten years of silence – apart from the brief Trondheim controversy in 1919 – the prohibition of shechita would be approved by the cabinet without first notifying the Jewish community. In fact, the ordinance had never been adopted by the Council of State; however, because of a premature press release by the Ministry of Agriculture on December 11, Norway’s Jewish community was for several weeks led to believe that shechita had been prohibited.

In fact, the Ministry of Agriculture had been working on a draft for an ordinance on slaughter ever since the 1914 Aker controversy. Despite the initial reluctance of Ole Malm, a lengthy process had nevertheless been initiated by the Ministry this year. This bureaucratic process had already begun before the case against the trustee of Kristiania’s Mosaic Congregation had been dropped by the Director of Public Prosecutions in spring 1914, and was concluded when the Ministry submitted a proposal for a slaughter ordinance to the cabinet in December 1925. However, most likely due to Malm’s unwillingness to contribute to a prohibition of shechita, the dossier was already in 1914 put aside until 1921. From 1921 until December 1925, the case gained momentum, and bureaucrats and officials of the Ministry of Agriculture were in

⁶²⁴ In Norwegian constitutional law, the term ‘royal decree’ [kongelig resolusjon] is used to describe decisions made by the Council of State (the cabinet) in the sovereign’s presence. These royal decrees are usually appointments to higher offices or to new permanent boards and councils, but can also be ordinances and matters in which the sovereign has statutory decision-making authority.

⁶²⁵ Ordinances [‘Plakater’, or more recently usually ‘Forskrifter’] are provisions that the Council of State has been given the authority to make by the Storting, or to delegate to a ministry.

⁶²⁶ Mendelsohn 1969, p. 573.

⁶²⁷ The Kristiania daily newspaper *Verdens Gang* wrote two reports on the case in September 1921 (September 8 and 13), and Halvor Horne wrote a piece on the process in *Aftenposten* on June 12, 1924. Likewise, the animal protection movement reported frequently on the case in its journal *Dyrenes Ven*.

these years drafting and redrafting a slaughter ordinance that eventually would include a prohibition of shechita. Although a prohibition of shechita would have been the most significant result of the ordinance had it been adopted by the Council of State, it was by no means evident that this would be the outcome. In the Ministry of Agriculture, the case became an object of disagreement between the political leadership, bureaucrats, and experts. Depending on who was working on the draft, it changed back and forth several times from being an anti-shechita measure to being a measure that in fact would protect shechita.

This chapter will focus on the almost ten-year-long interlude when the issue was mostly absent from the public, and will concentrate on conflicting policies pursued within the government. Under the leadership of Ole Malm and his successor Halvor Horne, the Veterinary Office pursued a policy that would have included legal protection of shechita in the ordinance. For these veterinaries, the most important objective in improving slaughter methods was to abolish private slaughterhouses. In their view, issues regarding the Jewish slaughter method were of secondary importance. Malm and Horne stressed the importance of controlled environments in public slaughterhouses, as opposed to the uncontrollable private butcheries outside the veterinary authorities' jurisdiction. Therefore, their preferred solution was to allow shechita in public slaughterhouses.

However, once the draft was in the hands of Minister of Agriculture Haakon Five of the Liberal Party cabinets of Otto Blehr (1921–1923) and Johan Ludwig Mowinckel (1924–1926), the ordinance was transformed into a purely anti-shechita measure. In Five's opinion, kosher slaughtering constituted a foreign practice in a Christian country and an unnecessary obstacle in modernising and streamlining Norwegian agriculture and food production. Other members of Mowinckel's cabinet were more concerned with Norwegian Jews' religious freedom, and the Council of State eventually dismissed Five's anti-shechita proposal in December 1925.

Malm's 1914 Draft for a Slaughter Ordinance

As shown in chapter 3, after the case against Axel Grün had been dropped, the Director of Public Prosecutions endorsed a proposal from the Aker chief of police to prohibit kosher slaughter through applying a provision of the penal code which allowed the cabinet to decree specific regulations on transporting and slaughtering animals. A few months earlier, on February 12, the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania had petitioned the Storting for

legislation on slaughtering livestock.⁶²⁸ The petition was subsequently forwarded to the cabinet, which delegated it to the proper authority, the Ministry of Agriculture. Contrary to the initiative of the police, the inquiry directed to the Storting did not mention kosher slaughter explicitly as the target for such legislation. However, newspaper reports from the association's general assembly a few weeks later on February 25 show that a prohibition of kosher slaughter indeed had been the main intention behind the petition.⁶²⁹ The association's intention was to have shechita prohibited on a *national* level, which of course would not have been the result even if Grün had been convicted for having violated the penal code's provisions on animal cruelty. At the same general assembly, Ole Malm, attending as ordinary member of the association, could inform that the petition had been forwarded to the Ministry of Agriculture, where it at present was pending at his desk. 'And here it will stay', Malm added with *Schadenfreude*.⁶³⁰

Despite this, Prime Minister and head of the Ministry of Agriculture, Gunnar Knudsen, instructed Malm to put together a draft for a slaughter ordinance.⁶³¹ In April 1914, the draft was submitted to the county governors [Amtmenn] and to several other institutions and organisations for consultation. By including a paragraph in the draft recognising shechita as an *a priori* legitimate method of slaughter, Malm wanted to forestall future petitions for a prohibition of shechita. It is clear that Prime Minister Knudsen also shared Malm's intentions, since he, as head of the ministry, signed the draft. Malm's draft avoided questioning the legitimacy of kosher slaughter simply by stating 'animals which are permitted to be slaughtered according to the Jewish method, should be treated in a way ensuring that the animal is not harmed or does not suffer unnecessarily during the casting and before the incision'.⁶³² Although not stated explicitly, the draft would permit an exemption for Jews to slaughter animals without using previous stunning, which elsewhere in the draft was required for all animals destined for food.

⁶²⁸ The proposal in its entirety is presented in *Dyrenes Ven*, February 1914, p. 9.

⁶²⁹ Precisely because of this, the general assembly gained an unusual amount of attention from the major Kristiania newspapers; see reports on February 26, 1914 in *Aftenposten*, *Tidens Tegn*, *Verdens Gang*, *Morgenbladet*, and *Social-Demokraten*.

⁶³⁰ 'Generalforsamling' in *Dyrenes Ven*, March 1914, p. 21.

⁶³¹ Gunnar Knudsen (1848–1928) of the Liberal Party served as both prime minister and head of the Ministry of Agriculture in his second cabinet (1913–1920).

⁶³² The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

After having received the consultation responses from county governors, Malm never touched the case again. Malm's successor Halvor Horne (1866–1952) later identified the diverging positions among the responses as the reason why Malm never pursued the matter further: 'After having worked through the subject, he found it so complicated or difficult that he simply could not manage it'.⁶³³ From what is known of Malm's personality and working capacity, this explanation sounds highly unlikely. Malm was extremely productive up to his death in 1917, and even published a book the year before he died about the causes of declining birth rates in Norway.⁶³⁴ Horne himself later described Malm as an 'exceptionally energetic and proactive leader'.⁶³⁵ A far more plausible explanation for Malm's lack of interest in drafting the slaughter ordinance may be found in his own statement to the Kristiania association's general assembly, namely that he intentionally wanted to terminate the case. Horne might have been correct in his assumption that it was 'diverging positions' among responses that made Malm dismiss the case, however, most likely because many responses diverged from Malm's own position. However, instead of rejecting the animal protection movement's petition entirely, Malm attempted to transform the proposal from an anti-shechita measure into regulations that in fact would protect shechita. Ten years later, this manoeuvre was also attempted by his successor Halvor Horne.

The Slaughter Ordinance under Minister Five

On May 16, 1917, Ole Malm died, and Halvor Horne succeeded him as head of the Veterinary Office on July 1, 1917. Until then, Horne had served as Malm's assistant and deputy since the Veterinary Office was established in 1890. Horne, educated as a veterinary at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural College in Copenhagen, shared Malm's view on veterinary science as primarily a means to prevent the spread of contagious diseases among animals and humans. Horne had originally planned to study bacteriology under Malm's old teacher and colleague, Professor C. J. Salomonsen at the University of Copenhagen,⁶³⁶ but had instead been called back to Kristiania to serve under Malm at the newly established Veterinary

⁶³³ H[alvor] Horne: 'Om istandbringelse av regler for en mere human avlivning av husdyr. Lov om slaktning?' in *Aftenposten*, 12.06.1924. See also a memorandum by Horne, dated November 30, 1921 (The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101).

⁶³⁴ Malm 1916.

⁶³⁵ Horne 1925, p. 82.

⁶³⁶ Carl Julius Salomonsen (1847–1924) was a Danish bacteriologist of Jewish origin. After having studied abroad, Salomonsen was the first to introduce medical bacteriology in Scandinavia, and taught at the University of Copenhagen from 1883 until his death. Salomonsen had also been Ole Malm's teacher when Malm studied in Copenhagen in 1889, and they maintained a close friendship until Malm's death in 1917 (see correspondence in the National Library of Norway, Collection of Manuscripts and Letters, Letter Collection No. 121).

Office.⁶³⁷ Although Horne also shared Malm's opinions regarding shechita, Horne seems to have been less resistant to pressure from the animal protection movement. Horne was not only himself a leading member of the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania,⁶³⁸ but he also lacked much of Malm's academic authority. Horne was more of a classical bureaucrat, and did not possess Malm's unconventional and charismatic features or his scholarly formation in literature and languages. He also lacked Malm's background as both physician and veterinary with a doctorate in medicine, and not least Malm's position as a politician and public figure.

Thus, after numerous requests from the animal protection movement, Horne, although somewhat reluctantly, felt obliged take up work on Malm's draft for slaughter provisions in 1921. A report in *Dyrenes Ven* in 1919 could state that the Ministry of Agriculture still had the drafting on slaughter provisions 'under consideration'.⁶³⁹ However, the direct cause for Horne's reopening of the case seems to have been a resolution adopted by the national animal protectionist congress in Kristiania in 1921, where different animal protection associations 'strongly urged the Ministry of Justice [*sic*] not to wait any longer with issuing specific provisions on slaughtering'.⁶⁴⁰ The reason why this particular resolution led to measures in the Ministry of Agriculture can probably be found in the new Minister of Agriculture Haakon Five's endorsement of the cause. *Dyrenes Ven* reported that 'this ministry's current head, Minister Five, has a warm interest in solving the issue as soon as possible'.⁶⁴¹ According to peasant movement organ *Nationen*, Five had once witnessed kosher slaughtering in America, 'and promised himself to do everything to have this prohibited in Norway'.⁶⁴²

Five was the Liberal Party's leading agricultural politician in the interwar years, and had also been regarded as former Prime Minister Gunnar Knudsen's preferred successor as leader of the party when the latter retired from politics in 1921.⁶⁴³ As minister of agriculture in the early

⁶³⁷ Horne 1925, p. 71.

⁶³⁸ Horne was elected to the board of the Animal Protection Association of Kristiania for the first time in 1924. Among the other board members in the early 1920s were Johan Søhr (from 1920) and Amund Lo (from 1924) (see *Dyrenes Ven*, March-April 1921, p. 17; *Dyrenes Ven*, March-April 1924, p. 12; *Dyrenes Ven* March-April 1925, p. 11).

⁶³⁹ Victor Nielsen-Sæther: '60 Aar' in *Dyrenes Ven*, September-October 1919, p. 68.

⁶⁴⁰ 'Slaktelov-saken' in *Dyrenes Ven*, Mai-Juni 1922, p. 22.

⁶⁴¹ 'Slaktelov-saken' in *Dyrenes Ven*, Mai-Juni 1922, p. 22. The journal of the Norwegian Butcher's Association also endorsed the demand of the animal protectionist congress in its September issue for 1921 ('Vi maa faa en human slagtelov. Dyrevennernes landsmøte' in *Tidsskrift for Slagtere og Pølsefolk*, September 1921).

⁶⁴² 's. s. s.': 'Kampen mot grusomme slagtemetoder' in *Nationen*, 09.01.1926.

⁶⁴³ Haakon Five (1880–1944) was educated at the Agricultural University of Norway at Ås [Norges Landbrukshøgskole] and Eidgenössisches Polytechnikum Zürich, Switzerland. He was minister of agriculture in four cabinets: in Gunnar Knudsen's second from 1919–1920, in Otto Blehr's second cabinet 1921–1923, in J. L.

1920s and later in the mid 1930s, Five was an ardent champion of agricultural modernisation. In opposition to the newly founded Peasant Party, Five maintained that the government's main task in agricultural politics was not to provide regulations and subsidies stimulating agricultural production, but rather to educate farmers in the latest innovations and to support research on agriculture.⁶⁴⁴ Educated as both an economist and an agronomist, Five strongly believed in modernisation and progress, and his opposition to the Jewish slaughter method may be viewed in this context.

Although foreseen as Gunnar Knudsen's heir, Five did not share Knudsen's or his successor Johan Ludwig Mowinckel's views on individual rights and religious freedom. Apart from agricultural politics, Five also engaged in the struggle for an alcohol prohibition in the 1920s, and was one of the leading prohibitionists in the Liberal Party.⁶⁴⁵ As county governor in his home county Nord-Trøndelag in the 1930s, Five created controversy when, in connection with the 900-year anniversary of Christianity's introduction in Norway, he refused Catholics permission to use loudspeakers during their celebration of mass at Stiklestad, where St. Olav had won the battle marking Christianity's victory over heathendom in 1030.⁶⁴⁶

However, more important in this context is Five's role in one of the major discriminatory campaigns against the Gypsy and Traveller minorities in the 1930s, namely the struggle for a prohibition of horse keeping by vagrants. The case has interesting parallels to the prohibition of kosher slaughter, and Five played a similar role in both cases. In 1925, Five had responded positively to the animal protection movement's petition to prohibit ownership of horses among Gypsies and Travellers, contrary to advices of the governmental body responsible for issues regarding Gypsies and Travellers.⁶⁴⁷ When Five returned to the cabinet in 1933, he included a paragraph in the cabinet's animal protection bill prohibiting ownership of horses among Gypsies and Travellers.⁶⁴⁸ The paragraph met considerable opposition in the Storting, and was not adopted. MP Erling Bjørnson, for instance, meant that the paragraph would lead

Mowinckel's first cabinet 1924–1926, and finally in Mowinckel's third cabinet 1933–1935. Although a leading figure in the Liberal Party, Five never became its leader. He was vice president of the party from 1927, but never challenged Mowinckel's leadership in the party, nor his position as prime minister (Haffner 1949, p. 226; Mjeldheim 2001, p. 109).

⁶⁴⁴ Bjørgum 1970, p. 25f.

⁶⁴⁵ Fuglum 1995, p. 576.

⁶⁴⁶ Angell 2000, p. 50.

⁶⁴⁷ The Norwegian Mission for Homeless People [Norsk misjon blant hjemløse].

⁶⁴⁸ Haave 2000, p. 312.

to ‘persecution of a specific race of people’, and drew parallels to the new racial laws in Germany.⁶⁴⁹

Although out of office by then, Five also participated as MP in the parliamentary debate on kosher slaughter in 1927. Five meant that the issue concerned two conflicting religious notions: that of the Jews and that of the Norwegian people. For Norwegians, treatment of animals was a ‘question of profound religious character’, and according to Five, kosher slaughter was offensive to ‘our religious belief’. When two such views came in conflict, ‘the Norwegian people’s sense of justice and the Norwegian people’s religious stance must prevail’, according to Five.⁶⁵⁰ As will be evident from later chapters, Five thus assumed a position similar to that of many Peasant Party politicians, and in these questions Five seems to have been closer to the agrarian-nationalist wing of the Peasant Party than to his own party. This should not be surprising, given that Five, during his studies at the Norwegian School of Agriculture, had been close to two of the 1920s’ leading Peasant Party politicians, Jon Sundby and Jens Hundseid.⁶⁵¹ These two were also among the main opponents of shechita in the parliamentary debates in 1927, 1928, and 1929. Also noteworthy is that Five, after having completed studies in Norway, went to study further in Switzerland, where a prohibition of shechita was introduced already in 1893. Five was also known to have strong nationalist sentiments. In the entry on Five in the first edition of the Norwegian Biographical Encyclopaedia, the Liberal Party MP Kristofer Indrehus (1860–1945) wrote the following about his fellow party member:

Five is of old peasant ancestry; his family has owned the farm for ages. Not a poor legacy for a man. To live within nature, to live and build on ancestral soil generation after generation creates a confident tradition, national instincts – strong forces in a race, a people’s will and ability to live.⁶⁵²

Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that Five was the first politician on the national level to support a prohibition of shechita, and as will be demonstrated later in this chapter, his initiative to reopen the drafting of the ordinance was motivated precisely by this concern.

⁶⁴⁹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1935, åttende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*. Oslo 1935, p. 344. Erling Bjørnson (1868–1969), the youngest son of the famous author Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, incidentally represented the Peasant Party, and would later join Quisling’s National Unity Party during the Second World War.

⁶⁵⁰ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*. Oslo 1927, p. 1103. Five also used these arguments in a letter printed in *Dagbladet* shortly after his cabinet had resigned in the spring of 1926; see Haakon Five: ‘Den jødiske ‘schächting’’ in *Dagbladet*, 22.05.1926.

⁶⁵¹ Gabrielsen 1970, p. 56.

⁶⁵² Indrehus 1929, p. 147.

However, in Halvor Horne's Veterinary Office, the 1921 animal protection congress' resolution, and its endorsement by Horne's head of ministry, did not at first result in a draft seeking to *prohibit* shechita. On the contrary, Horne followed Malm's line and included a paragraph in his first drafts protecting shechita 'for the time being'. In a draft dated November 29, 1921, the ordinance contained a separate paragraph exempting shechita from § 1's requirement of previous stunning:

§ 3: These provisions shall for the time being not apply to the Jewish slaughter method, the so-called 'Schächtning', when it is performed by skilled men in accordance with the Jewish ritual, and when casting and binding of the animal do not cause any injury or unnecessary pain.⁶⁵³

This remarkable paragraph, which explicitly protected shechita, was replaced in the next draft, that of December 5, 1921, by a less explicit formulation, nevertheless allowing the Ministry of Agriculture to exempt the Jewish method.⁶⁵⁴ Horne's explanation of this paragraph shows that he wanted to transform what the political leadership intended as an anti-shechita measure into general slaughter provisions in order to protect the Jewish method: 'I am of the opinion that proposals [from the animal protectionists] mostly concern the abolition of kosher slaughtering, but I cannot be a part of that'. Horne further elaborated his view in a memorandum:

For my part, I am willing to share the notion, also asserted by Malm, that properly conducted, kosher slaughter is not animal cruelty. Therefore, I would recommend to the Ministry that, for instance, the Jews of Kristiania be granted an exemption from § 1.⁶⁵⁵

In spring 1922, the draft enclosed with the memorandum quoted above was submitted for consultation to the main office of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Department of Agriculture [Landbruksavdelingen]. However, due to a misunderstanding, the Department of Agriculture did not respond until November 1922. The department's director concurred with the animal protection movement concerning the need for more specific rules on slaughtering,⁶⁵⁶ but

⁶⁵³ The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

⁶⁵⁴ It also allowed the municipalities to exempt slaughtering of reindeer from the general rule of stunning, but Horne's notes on the different drafts reveal that shechita was his main concern. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

⁶⁵⁵ Memorandum enclosed with the December 5 draft. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

⁶⁵⁶ Ole Taraldsen Bjånes (1875–1957), was head of the Agricultural Department from 1918 until 1942, and then from 1945 until his retirement in 1946. Like his superior in the Ministry in 1922 (Five), Bjånes was educated an agronomist at the Norwegian School of Agriculture (Steenstrup 1930, p. 50).

Horne's senior colleague disagreed on the need for an exemption for shechita: 'Kosher slaughter should be prohibited. I think it is stretching a bit too far in tolerance by allowing people to torment animals for religious reasons'.⁶⁵⁷ This is the last remark on the dossier until the autumn of 1924, and Horne and the Veterinary Office once more put the case on hold. In a much later remark dated June 5, 1925, Horne explained the postponements by citing the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Sweden and Denmark, which had entirely occupied the officer responsible for the case.⁶⁵⁸ However, since foot-and-mouth disease first broke out in Sweden and Denmark at the end of 1924,⁶⁵⁹ this cannot be the reason why nothing was done with the slaughter ordinance during 1923 and the first half of 1924.

The newly established Federation of Norwegian Animal Protection Associations declared at its first convention in 1923 that Horne's 1921 draft (which exempted shechita) was highly unsatisfactory, and the delegates feared that the case was going into stalemate.⁶⁶⁰ The animal protectionists must have sensed Horne's opposition, and had their worries confirmed in a letter from Horne in March 1924. In his response to a renewed petition for slaughter provisions submitted by the leader of the Federation, Christine Geirsvold, Horne wrote that 'In the Ministry's opinion, such rules would in reality be futile, as they cannot be monitored at the places where they are supposed to be put to use'.⁶⁶¹ Horne also published an article on the slaughter ordinance in *Aftenposten* on June 12, 1924, probably either to respond to similar inquiries from the animal protection movement or to forestall future inquiries. In the article, he described the process so far, with all its difficulties regarding implementing the same set of rules in a country with highly different geographical conditions and cultural practices,⁶⁶² and regarding the Jewish slaughter method. Horne further stated that although his 1921 draft

⁶⁵⁷ Remark on the memorandum signed Bj., dated November 7, 1922. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

⁶⁵⁸ Remark by Horne, dated June 5, 1925, The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101. In 1920 one of the Veterinary Office's Judicial Secretary posts was converted into a Principal Officer post [Byråchef], mainly to relieve the head of the office (usually a veterinary, in this case Halvor Horne) in judicial questions (Horne 1925, p. 82).

⁶⁵⁹ Thorshaug 1928, p. 3.

⁶⁶⁰ Gierløff 1945, p. 24.

⁶⁶¹ Copy of letter to Mrs. Geirsvold dated March 15, 1924. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

⁶⁶² Especially Sami reindeer slaughtering.

would be an acceptable solution, the Ministry preferred to postpone the case because it feared that such provisions would only be ‘paper provisions’.⁶⁶³

The cause of Horne’s sudden lack of interest in working on the slaughter ordinance during spring 1924 might as well be found in the change of political leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture after the resignation of Otto Blehr’s Liberal Party cabinet on March 6, 1923. Former minister, Haakon Five, who since he became head of the Ministry in 1921 had been eager to prohibit shechita, was replaced by the conservative Anders Venger in Otto B. Halvorsen’s cabinet.⁶⁶⁴ That the case was reopened shortly after Five’s return as minister of agriculture in Johan Ludwig Mowinckel’s first Liberal Party cabinet on July 25, 1924, strengthens the impression that Five was the main proponent in the Ministry of Agriculture for prohibiting shechita, while the Ministry’s bureaucracy and the veterinary authorities opposed a prohibition.

Five’s Return and Re-drafting of the Ordinance

With Five’s return as head of ministry and the re-opening of the case, the Ministry of Agriculture approached the Ministry of Justice on October 2, 1924 for consultation on the slaughter ordinance’s judicial aspects. The Ministry of Justice had no objections in its reply of October 13,⁶⁶⁵ but with the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, the case was deferred once more until June 1925. In a remark on the dossier dated June 5, 1925, Horne requested the Ministry of Agriculture’s director general, Kristian Fauchald,⁶⁶⁶ to transfer the case to another section due to Horne’s principal officer’s sick leave. Subsequently, Director General Fauchald himself handled the case, probably due to a request from Minister Five to speed-up the work.⁶⁶⁷ However, the draft Fauchald presented to Five on October 17, 1925 was almost

⁶⁶³ With this, Horne repeated the explanation to Mrs. Geirsvold, namely that the provisions would be difficult to monitor and thus futile. H[alvor] Horne: ‘Om istandbringelse av regler for en mere human avlivning av husdyr. Lov om slaktning?’ in *Aftenposten*, 12.06.1924.

⁶⁶⁴ Venger continued as minister of agriculture in Abraham Berge’s cabinet from May 30 the same year. Like Five, Venger (1872–1935) had a background as a farmer. However, whereas Five was elected MP only after being appointed to cabinet, Venger was elected to the Storting already in 1919.

⁶⁶⁵ See letter from the Ministry of Justice, dated October 13, 1924 and also undated remark by Fauchald from September 1925. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

⁶⁶⁶ Kristian Adolf Fauchald (1865–1930) was educated a lawyer and appointed director general [ekspedisjonssjef] of the Ministry of Agriculture in 1907. He remained in this position until his death in 1930 (Steenstrup 1930, p. 119 and p. 462).

⁶⁶⁷ See remark on the dossier by Fauchald from September 30, 1925: ‘The Minister wishes this [case] processed as soon as possible’. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

identical to Horne's draft, and still contained the clause exempting shechita.⁶⁶⁸ Since this draft still did not fulfil Minister Five's main intention, it was promptly reformulated. Fauchald wrote in a concluding remark:

The Minister has today concurred with my proposal, with the sole change that the Ministry of Agriculture shall not be allowed to give general or specific exemptions from the slaughter provisions. In fact, he does not want that it should be possible to allow kosher slaughter.⁶⁶⁹

Before the ordinance was to be presented to the cabinet for approval, the draft was once again submitted to the Ministry of Justice for consultation. This gave Horne an opportunity to express his concerns about the changes imposed by Minister Five, and possibly to intervene in favour of allowing shechita. Horne's remarks on the draft for the letter to the Ministry of Justice show that he feared that Five's changes would make the ordinance conflict with legislation on religious freedom:

As far as I know, all Christian [*sic*] dissenters in Norway are ensured religious freedom. It will be up to the Ministry of Justice to consider whether the Constitution or the Dissenter Act or other laws would obstruct implementation of the slaughter ordinance.⁶⁷⁰

Horne's concern is not difficult to understand, having in mind that legislation defining religious freedom for non-Christian individuals first appeared with the 1964 revision of the Constitution.⁶⁷¹ However, Fauchald did not include Horne's remarks in the final letter to the Ministry of Justice,⁶⁷² nor did the Ministry of Justice's response contain any objections relating to religious freedom.⁶⁷³ The final draft was also submitted for consultation to a range of organisations and institutions that somehow would be affected by the ordinance.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁶⁸ Undated remark by Fauchald from September 1925. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

⁶⁶⁹ Remark by Fauchald on September 17, 1925. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101. Underlining in the original document.

⁶⁷⁰ By 'Christian dissenters', Horne must have meant individuals dissenting from Christianity. Remarks by Horne on a draft for a letter to the Ministry of Justice, dated October 29, 1925. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

⁶⁷¹ Fliflet 2005, p. 58.

⁶⁷² The Ministry of Agriculture noted in the letter to the Ministry of Justice that the new draft, with its removal of the exemption paragraph, would in fact prohibit shechita; see copy of letter to the Ministry of Justice dated November 2, 1925. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

⁶⁷³ See letter to the Ministry of Justice, dated November 2, 1925, as well as an undated remark by Fauchald from September 1925. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

⁶⁷⁴ The managers of the slaughterhouses in Trondheim, Bergen, Oslo, Stavanger, The Norwegian Council of Agriculture, The Norwegian Butchers' Association, The Norwegian Veterinary Association, The Norwegian

However, none of the country's three Jewish congregations were consulted. Of the consultative bodies, only the Federation of Norwegian Animal Protection Associations had remarks, emphasising the importance of prohibiting shechita. The federation also expressed hope that with new slaughter provisions, the Jewish method would be 'prevented from sneaking in under some interpretation'.⁶⁷⁵

A Premature Press Release and yet another Postponement

After some minor changes suggested by some of the consultative bodies had been incorporated, the Ministry prepared a statement to the press, which was to be released on December 11, 1925, the same day as the ordinance would be approved by royal decree in the Council of State. The main message in the press release was that 'kosher slaughtering of animals (slaughter according to the Jewish ritual) is prohibited from the day the provisions come in force' (December 15, 1925). However, the ordinance was not discussed in the Council of State on December 11,⁶⁷⁶ and the press release was withdrawn the same day.⁶⁷⁷ Despite this, some major newspapers still published the press release. Thus, the Norwegian population could read in the newspapers on Friday December 11, 1925 that a prohibition of kosher slaughtering had been approved in the Council of State, entering force on December 15.⁶⁷⁸ When the misunderstanding was cleared up in early 1926, the animal protection movement reacted with great disappointment and irritation, and directed its resentment towards Norwegian Jews. A couple of months later, the animal protection journal *Dyrenes Ven* wrote that the cabinet's postponement of the ordinance had been caused by a Jewish intervention. Thus, the fears expressed by Victor Nielsen-Sæther during the Trondheim controversy six years earlier had become true in the minds of animal protectionists:

Federation of Animal Protection Associations, and The Animal Protection Association of Oslo. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

⁶⁷⁵ Letter from the Federation of Norwegian Animal Protection Associations, dated November 5, 1925. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

⁶⁷⁶ The National Archives, The Secretariat of the State, Ac: Kongelig resolusjoner 1905-1969: prot. 1925, Kgl. res. nr. 1123-2897.

⁶⁷⁷ Letter from Norsk Telegrambyrå, dated December 11, 1925. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 101.

⁶⁷⁸ Mendelsohn 1969, p. 575.

One had the greatest expectations that finally, after many years of struggles, the long-awaited and absolutely necessary law was realised. Only the cabinet's approval remained. However, the Jews got to hear about the case, and immediately did everything they could to hinder implementation of a law that would prohibit their barbaric slaughter method.⁶⁷⁹

Nothing in the government archives suggests that there had been any intervention on the part of the Jews. In fact, a letter from Prime Minister Mowinckel to the explorer, scientist and diplomat Fridtjof Nansen reveals that the decision to postpone the ordinance was taken by the cabinet in a conference some days prior to the official Council of State.⁶⁸⁰ Nansen had been urged by his friend Lucien Wolf in London some weeks earlier on December 29 to take up the matter with the Norwegian Government.⁶⁸¹ Wolf had as Foreign Secretary of the Board of Deputies of British Jews been contacted by the Jewish community of Oslo, which in a letter to Wolf in late December had stated that 'the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture has issued an ordinance abolishing the Jewish method of slaughtering livestock for food as from January 1'.⁶⁸² After having received the news about the prohibition in a telegram from Wolf, Nansen immediately wrote to Prime Minister Mowinckel expressing his concern about the case. Referring to his participation in relief work during the famine in Russia, Nansen emphasised his good relations with Jews and Jewish organisations, and urged the cabinet to be accommodating towards Norwegian Jews in this matter. Nansen could not see any reason to prohibit shechita as long as it was conducted correctly, and also emphasised the importance of the question for Jews.⁶⁸³

In his reply, Prime Minister Mowinckel assured Nansen that no decision had been taken due to disagreements in the cabinet. Although a 'strong resentment' had prevailed among some cabinet members, most of the ministers had felt obliged to postpone the ordinance because of its consequences for Norway's Jewish population.⁶⁸⁴ In fact, all cabinet members except Five had agreed that the question should have been further examined before a final decision was

⁶⁷⁹ 'Slaktelovens ulykkelig skjæbne' in *Dyrenes Ven*, March 1926, p. 10.

⁶⁸⁰ Letter from Prime Minister Mowinckel to Fridtjof Nansen, dated January 9, 1926. The National Library, Collection of Manuscripts and Letters, Ms. fol. 1988:Q:6:F.

⁶⁸¹ Wire from Wolf to Nansen on December 29, 1925. The National Library, Collection of Manuscripts and Letters, Ms. fol. 1988:Q:6:F.

⁶⁸² Referred to in Wolf's letter to Fridtjof Nansen of January 1, 1926. The National Library, Collection of Manuscripts and Letters, Ms. fol. 1988:Q:6:F.

⁶⁸³ Letters from Nansen to Mowinckel, dated January 4 and 8, 1926. The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 102.

⁶⁸⁴ Letter from Mowinckel to Nansen, dated January 9, 1926. The National Library, Collection of Manuscripts and Letters, Ms. fol. 1988:Q:6:F.

reached.⁶⁸⁵ The request from the Mosaic Congregation of Oslo to Lucien Wolf confirms that there could not have been any intervention on behalf of the Jewish community before New Year 1926, since the congregation in late December still believed that shechita had been prohibited in Norway by royal decree on December 11.

Conclusion

As has been demonstrated in this chapter, the drafting of the slaughter ordinance became the subject of a struggle between the political leadership of the Ministry of Agriculture under Minister Haakon Five and its bureaucracy in the Veterinary Office, represented by Halvor Horne. This tug of war, wherein exempting shechita from the requirement of previous stunning became the main issue, can be summed up as follows: on behalf of Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture Gunnar Knudsen, Ole Malm had in April 1914 drawn up a draft for a slaughter ordinance according to the penal code's provisions for specifying regulations on 'the slaughtering and transporting of animals'. The draft was then circulated to county administrations and other institutions for consultation. However, many diverging positions among county governors made Malm put the case aside, either because implementing the different concerns raised would be too complicated, or perhaps more likely because the diverging responses made a good excuse for postponing work on the ordinance. In either case, the dossier was reopened over four years after Malm's death, because new Minister of Agriculture Haakon Five endorsed the demands of the newly established Federation of Norwegian Animal Protection Associations.

Under the new minister of agriculture, a new draft was prepared in 1921 by Malm's successor as head of the Veterinary Office, Halvor Horne. However, Horne's first draft failed to address the animal protection movement's demand to prohibit shechita, and in fact contained a paragraph explicitly protecting the Jewish community's right to practice shechita. Horne's stance in favour of the Jews met opposition in other sections of the Ministry, and when Five resigned together with the rest of Otto Blehr's second cabinet in March 1923, the case was put aside until Five's return as head of the Ministry of Agriculture in July 1924. Shortly after the return of the Liberal Party in government offices, the case was reopened on Five's initiative. Horne produced a new draft for consultation in the Ministry of Justice during the autumn of

⁶⁸⁵ Stortingsmelding No. 13, 1926, 'Angående spørsmålet om utferdigelse av almindelige regler for slaktning av husdyr' in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1926. Annen del*. Oslo 1926, p. 5.

1924, however, still containing a paragraph exempting shechita. Due to the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease, the case was postponed until summer 1925.

When a new draft finally was presented to Minister Five in October 1925, he promptly returned it for revision, as it still contained a paragraph exempting shechita. On this occasion, Five instructed the bureaucrats to remove the paragraph, since he did not want to allow shechita. Since removing the exemption for shechita was the only change demanded by Five, the impression that this was Five's main intention with the ordinance is strengthened. Despite the legal concerns raised by Horne regarding religious freedom, Five presented the ordinance in a cabinet conference in December 1925. In the cabinet, Five was met with the same concerns raised by Horne. An intervention in the religious life of the Jews could not be adopted without further deliberations, and Prime Minister Mowinckel together with the rest of the cabinet (except Five) agreed to postpone the case. Five could hardly have expected this outcome of the case, since a press release stating that 'Kosher slaughtering of animals is prohibited from the day the provisions come in force' was announced the same day as the ordinance was to be sanctioned by the Council of State.

Although the Board of Deputies of British Jews in London had asked Fridtjof Nansen to use his influence after having received news of the prohibition from the Mosaic Congregation in Oslo, the cabinet had decided to postpone considering the issue even before the Mosaic Congregation's request had reached London. Thus, contrary to the animal protection movement's claim, any 'intervention from the Jews', which allegedly had made the cabinet change its mind, could not have taken place. What contributed more than anything else to postpone the ordinance was probably Five's eagerness to have the issue settled without having to consider aspects of religious freedom. However, perhaps more striking than Five's eagerness and the subsequent opposition in cabinet is the strong resistance against the ordinance in his own bureaucracy. That overburdened bureaucrats are reluctant to establish new policy areas is hardly anything new. However, this alone cannot explain Horne's reluctance to work on the slaughter ordinance. From his statements regarding shechita, one may conclude that Horne was loyal to Malm's mindset and sensitive to the Jews' religious freedom. Whereas Malm had reacted with open confrontation, Horne tried to avoid difficult questions, and preferred to delay the process. When Five left as minister of agriculture with the Liberal Party cabinet's resignation in 1923, Horne succeeded in delaying the case

indefinitely. However, with the renewed insistence of Minister Five on a prohibition of shechita in his second period as minister of agriculture, Horne could not avoid to address the slaughter ordinance any longer. Horne's deteriorating health may also have contributed to weaken his resistance – the following spring he retired due to bad health, only 60 years old.

Part 4: Second Phase: The Kosher Slaughter Affair in the Norwegian Storting 1926–1929

Although a majority in Johan Ludwig Mowinckel's cabinet had rejected Minister of Agriculture Five's proposal for a slaughter ordinance prohibiting shechita, Five was able to convince cabinet members to submit a white paper [stortingsmelding] on slaughter regulations to the Storting as one of the cabinet's very last official acts before resigning on March 5, 1926. At the recommendation of the Storting's Agricultural Committee, the Storting unanimously decided to request that the new conservative cabinet of Ivar Lykke propose a law on slaughtering of 'larger and smaller domestic animals' in the next term of the Storting in 1927. However, long before the Lykke Cabinet submitted the requested bill to the Storting in late June 1927, public debate on kosher slaughter had exploded. Five's white paper had unleashed a press debate without precedence during spring and summer 1926. Simultaneously, local municipal councils, animal protection associations, and peasants' organisations around the country submitted anti-shechita petitions to the Storting. A novelty in this phase of the controversy was the strong condemnation of shechita not only in mainstream press of the larger cities, but also in local press, especially in the central East Country and Trøndelag. Never before had the Jewish minority in Norway been under so much pressure and negative attention as during these months. Then, another wave of agitation erupted when the lower chamber of the Storting, the Odelsting, decided to postpone the slaughter bill after having addressed the cabinet's proposal in May 1927.

The following two chapters will follow the kosher slaughtering affair in the Storting in 1926, 1927, and 1928, and will identify the main proponents for a prohibition and their motives. In addition, considerable attention will be given to public reactions, and how these relate to the parties' stances in parliamentary debates and voting. A point previously made by scholars is the Peasant Party's strong opposition to shechita, and the issue's role in the party's election campaign in 1927. However, the relatively strong opposition to shechita in most other parties has remained unexamined until now. Both the Liberal Party and the Labour Party were split over the issue. However, an analysis of Labour, Conservative, and Liberal MPs' voting behaviour in the three votes addressing kosher slaughtering in 1927, 1928, and 1929, respectively, suggests that MPs, irrespective of party affiliation, were more inclined to vote against kosher slaughtering in constituencies where the Peasant Party stood strong. Especially

in large-scale farming and meat-producing regions in the East Country and in Trøndelag, a majority of MPs from all parties voted against exempting shechita from the bill's requirement of previous stunning. On the other hand, Liberal and Labour Party MPs favourable to an exemption were largely elected from constituencies in the West Country and Northern Norway. Moreover, an examination of the regions where anti-shechita petitions were submitted to the Storting and regions where local press responded negatively to exempting shechita reveals that public opinion against shechita was concentrated in the same regions where MPs voting against shechita came from. Thus, the opposition to shechita among certain Labour MPs was far from arbitrary. On the contrary, opposition to shechita also played a similar role in parts of the Labour press as it did in the Peasant Party press.

With the press debates and parliamentary debates from 1926 to 1928 as backdrop, the last chapter in this section discusses the final parliamentary debate in 1929. This chapter will address different arguments for and against including an exemption clause for the Jewish slaughter method in the new law, and will attempt to evaluate the impact of different types of argumentation. The chapter will demonstrate how arguments of religious freedom found resonance only among a minority of the Liberal Party and Labour Party MPs, while Peasant Party MP's negative portrayals of Jews and the Jewish slaughter method, and their emphasis on the incompatibility of shechita with Norwegian 'sensibilities', were decisive for making the majority vote against the exemption and thus outlaw shechita in Norway from January 1, 1930.

4.1: 1926: Press Debates, Petitions, and Postponements

The main purpose of this chapter is to examine the reactions caused by Minister of Agriculture Haakon Five's white paper on slaughtering of February 1926. Who reacted, what were these reactions' geographical centres of gravity, and not at least, what were their contents? How did different actors and groups frame the issue? Which aspects were highlighted, and which arguments were used to support or condemn Minister Five's proposal to prohibit shechita? The chapter will also seek to relate the different framings to other contemporary debates involving some of the same actors, and not least, the chapter will look into how legislators in the government bureaucracy and in the Storting acted. An important finding in this respect, are the Storting's Agricultural Committee members' reactions when confronted to the sight of shechita. Their reactions after having observed kosher slaughtering in the Oslo Jewish community's butchery in Aker reveal how strong the animal protection movement's discursive hegemony had become. When the demonstration did not correspond to images of the Jewish 'ritual' disseminated by animal protectionists, the committee members assumed that the 'ritual' had been omitted, and that the slaughtering they had observed was not representative for kosher slaughtering.

Five's White Paper and the 'Popular Opinion'

Although Five's slaughter ordinance proposal was opposed by a majority of Mowinckel's cabinet, Five persuaded the cabinet to submit a white paper to the Storting, basically identical to his own presentation of the ordinance from December the previous year. The cabinet was facing its resignation due to failed negotiations over the national budget, and the cost of issuing the white paper must have been perceived as relatively low, even for the cabinet's opponents of a prohibition of shechita. At any rate, the white paper, approved in Council of State on February 26, 1926, still contained Five's ordinance draft, including the indispensable requirement of previous stunning. In Five's presentation, shechita was described as a slaughter method that with its 'practice against the animals and the human moral or sense of decency [sedelighetsfølelse] appears as offensive and gruesomely violent'. The white paper briefly discussed the problems the requirement of previous stunning would cause for the Jewish population, but concluded that 'the religious reasons claimed by the Mosaic Congregation must yield when they so decidedly conflict with the prevailing moral views in

this country'. The continued practice of shechita could not, according to Five, 'be reconciled with the Norwegian people's view on man's obligations towards animals'.⁶⁸⁶

The disagreement over the slaughter ordinance within cabinet, and Five's subsequent white paper, went far from unnoticed by the press. Even though the destiny of Five's proposal now lay in the Storting's hands, the peasant-movement press regretted the cabinet's decision not to address the ordinance, and claimed that this would mean the end for the struggle against kosher slaughtering.⁶⁸⁷ However, in the animal protection movement optimism still prevailed. The movement seized the moment and launched a press campaign that both in scope and tone exceeded the campaigns in Kristiania and Aker in 1913–1914, and in Trondheim in 1919. The message and argumentation were, however, well known from previous debates both home and abroad. The Peasant Party newspaper *Nationen*, took the lead in a familiar pattern. With enhanced pathos, *Nationen* continued *Landmandposten*'s outrage 13 years earlier over heinous Jewish 'sacrifices' and 'ceremonies'. 'It must break every animal friend's heart to hear about the manner in which animals are tormented during this ceremony', an anonymous submitter wrote, while the editor noted that

the kosher slaughtering ceremony is a somewhat developed form of the ancient Jewish sacrificial customs. The Norwegians also had similar sacrificial customs a thousand years ago. The ancient Norwegians sacrificed [blotet] to the heathen gods.⁶⁸⁸

However, not only were Jewish religious customs attacked – the editors and submitters to *Nationen* increasingly stigmatised Jews, and defined them as a group separated from Norwegians, unwanted in the country. An anonymous submitter suggested that the new slaughter regulations should have an amendment stating:

He who practices or provides occasion for slaughtering of animals by 'schächtning' shall immediately be expelled from the country. [...] We have no use for these people here; let them go somewhere where the culture stands on a lower level than in Norway.⁶⁸⁹

Another submitter more subtly stated that if Jews 'cannot please themselves to eat meat from Norwegian livestock, slaughtered in good Norwegian manner, they should rather leave

⁶⁸⁶ 'St. med. nr. 13 (1926). Angående spørsmålet om utferdigelse av almindelige regler for slaktning av husdyr' in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1926. Annen del*. Oslo 1926, p. 4.

⁶⁸⁷ Editorials in *Nationen*, 02.03.1926 and 08.03.1926.

⁶⁸⁸ 'Dyreven': 'Respekt for det levende liv' in *Nationen*, 08.03.1926; 'Brokete tilstande' in *Nationen*, 02.03.1926.

⁶⁸⁹ 'Dyreven': 'Slagteregele' in *Nationen*, 18.03.1926.

Norway'.⁶⁹⁰ What was meant by 'good Norwegian manner' is less clear, since there was little specifically 'Norwegian' about modern slaughter methods. However, the submitter stated that slaughtering of 'our domestic animals' must correspond to the 'Norwegian religious feeling' [norsk religionsfølelse]. This submitter thus put forward an argument that would be among the most common in the years to follow. Responding to urges not to offend the Jewish minority's religious feelings, opponents used the same argument inverted. It was the Jews who were the minority, and who consequently had to respect the 'religious feelings' of the Norwegians, not the opposite. Also ex-minister, now Liberal Party MP for Nord-Trøndelag County, Haakon Five, elaborated this argument in a longer piece in *Dagbladet*. Five, identified by the liberal paper as 'one of the most eager champions of this demand', asked if concerns for an 'alien religious community should hinder legislation in our country that is in accordance with the prevailing sense of justice'. However, in Five's argumentation, it was not only a question of 'sense of justice' – the demand for humane slaughter methods 'builds on feelings in our people of a deep religious character'.⁶⁹¹

The argument relied on the animal protection movement's old claim that there was a common, almost innate, positive, and loving attitude towards animals among Norwegians. In the 1926 debate, this notion became an important premise, defining the identity of the Norwegian farmer. If only the farmers knew how the Jews slaughtered *Norwegian* animals, they would rise against the Jewish slaughter method. An editorial in *Nationen* at the end of March 1926 stated that:

there is all reason to expect from the Norwegian farmers that they now rise and demand their country purged of this nuisance [uvæsen]. It would have happened a long time ago, had the rural communities been fully aware of what this really involves.⁶⁹²

Shortly after, several initiatives to 'enlighten' the rural population were published in the peasant-movement press, together with initiatives from the animal protection movement to make 'the people's opinion' [folkemeningen] known among politicians. For instance, the teacher, children's books author, and animal protectionist Lars Kjølstad (1861–1932),⁶⁹³ published in several East Country newspapers a call for a prohibition of kosher slaughtering,

⁶⁹⁰ Ivar Osa: 'Schächting og religiøsitet' in *Nationen*, 26.03.1926.

⁶⁹¹ Haakon Five: 'Den jødiske 'schächting'. En uttalelse av stortingsmann Five' in *Dagbladet*, 22.05.1926.

⁶⁹² Editorial in *Nationen*, 24.03.1926. Similar notions of a 'people's opinion' were also conveyed in the peasant-movement local press in the East Country; see for instance *Vestopland*, 28.06.1926 or *Østlandets Blad*, 28.06.1926.

⁶⁹³ Risa 1981, p. 186.

directed to ‘municipal councils and agricultural associations’. Here he also invoked the growing negative sentiments against Jews increasingly appearing in the press in the 1920s:

As is well known, we have quite a few Jews here in this country, especially in the larger cities [...] And equally known is it, at least by now, that Jews obtain their meat with a slaughter method which is highly crude and heartless.

With reference to the Mowinckel cabinet’s rejection of Five’s ordinance, Kjølstad stated that

If the Jews mean that God will reject them because they are being refused the opportunity to torment slaughter animals sufficiently – well, then they should do their God the favour of clearing off the country [pigge sig ut av landet] as soon as possible.

Kjølstad ended his piece by ‘urgently requesting municipal councils and agricultural associations here in the district that they in their forthcoming meetings will adopt and submit an appeal to the national authorities to have kosher slaughtering prohibited’.⁶⁹⁴

While Kjølstad’s project clearly was to ‘spread knowledge’ about kosher slaughtering in rural districts of the East Country, the Women’s Animal Protection Association inversely wanted to make the ‘people’s opinion’ known to the Storting by publishing a pamphlet containing excerpts of press coverage, mainly from the East Country and Trøndelag.⁶⁹⁵ The pamphlet was distributed to every MP, enclosed with a letter urging the Storting to adopt a law prohibiting shechita.⁶⁹⁶ Both Kjølstad’s and the Women’s Association’s strategies seem to have been successful – during the spring of 1926, the Storting received nearly a hundred petitions from municipal councils, animal protection associations, and agricultural organisations. The petitions almost exclusively came from the East Country and Trøndelag. In the County of Østfold, 8 unanimous municipal councils and 4 animal protection associations petitioned the Storting to prohibit shechita. In Akershus, Hedmark, and Sør-Trøndelag, 5 municipal councils, respectively, did the same thing, while as many as 9 animal protection associations and municipal animal welfare councils in Telemark petitioned the Storting.⁶⁹⁷ In

⁶⁹⁴ Lars Kjølstad: ‘Schächtningen. En henvendelse til kommunestyrer og landbruksforeninger her i distriktet’ in *Indlandsposten* 06.04.1926 and Lars Kjølstad: ‘Schächtningen maa forbydes’ in *Aftenposten*, 22.04.1926. A similar appeal from Kristian Dyring, the former editor of *Dyrenes Ven* and secretary of the Oslo Animal Protection Association, was printed in *Aftenposten* on 30.04.1926.

⁶⁹⁵ *Indlæg i dagspressen om schächtningen og slakteloven*. Oslo 1926.

⁶⁹⁶ ‘Schächtningen og slakteloven’ in *Dyrenes Beskytter*, No. 3, 1926, p. 19.

⁶⁹⁷ Most of the petitions are to be found in the Archives of the Storting (Stortingets Ekstraktprotokoll 1926, Nos. 1–449 and Nos. 450–713), while some have ended up in the archives of the Ministry of Agriculture in the National Archives (Veterinærkontoret, Saksarkiv, No. 103).

addition to petitions found in the Storting archives, an unknown number of petitions were directed to individual MPs.⁶⁹⁸

In comparison, the number of petitions originating in the West Country and Northern Norway were insignificant. In all of Northern Norway, only one municipal council expressed its support for a prohibition of shechita (Velfjord in Nordland), and the same was the case in the West Country, where only the municipal council of Balestrand submitted a petition. This petition, however, constitutes an interesting exception. The initiative for the Balestrand petition most likely originated from the painter Hans Dahl (1849–1937). Dahl, originally an army officer, had been educated in Düsseldorf in the romantic tradition and lived many years in Berlin; however, he spent the last years of his life in the small village of Balestrand by the Sognefjord. Dahl had befriended Emperor Wilhelm II during one of the kaiser's many summer vacations in the Norwegian fjords in the years before the Great War, and the kaiser commissioned many paintings by Dahl, as well as conferring a professorship on him in 1910.⁶⁹⁹

Dahl himself wrote a letter to the new minister of agriculture, Ole Bærøe, in April 1926, enclosing an issue of the Swedish anti-Semitic journal *Vidi*, published by the notorious Barthold Lundén (1878–1932). *Vidi* had been published in Gothenbourg as a highly anti-Semitic tabloid since 1913, and had been the organ of the Swedish Anti-Semitic Association since its founding in 1923. According to the Swedish scholar Ola Larsmo, 'The newspaper was extreme but not widespread: at most it had a subscription of 25,000'.⁷⁰⁰ From the autumn of 1925, the paper ran an anti-shechita campaign, and it was an issue in this series that Dahl submitted to the minister of agriculture. Under the headline 'The Devilish Kosher Slaughtering', Lundén claimed that

The Talmud specifically prescribes that the Jew is not to eat meat from any animal that has not resisted strongly during the slaughtering. The more it suffers and the more it becomes caught by agony, the better, and the meat becomes more kosher, according to the Jew.⁷⁰¹

Lundén's *Vidi* was also highly critical of Jewish art, and represented a reactionary and nationalistic view on art shared by Dahl, who judging from his letter to the minister also

⁶⁹⁸ *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1927, p. 22.

⁶⁹⁹ Melkild 1993, p. 75.

⁷⁰⁰ Eriksen et al. 2008, p. 588; see also Tydén 1986, pp. 56–64 and Andersson 2013, p. 729.

⁷⁰¹ 'Den djäfvulska Schäktningen' in *Vidi*, 05.11.1925.

shared *Vidi*'s view on Jews in general and shechita in particular. Dahl ended his letter to the minister by stating: 'We have certainly no obligation to tolerate an alien race intruding into our country and recklessly offending our sensibilities towards animals'.⁷⁰²

Whether Dahl's letter was able to influence Minister Bærøe is difficult to tell, but Dahl seems to have been successful in convincing his home district's municipal council, in a part of the country where the public seems to have been indifferent to the question of prohibiting shechita. Not only the lack of petitions from this part of the country suggests this; there was hardly any hostile agitation in local press, as was the case in the East Country and Trøndelag. A few letters from newspapers in the Møre region were printed in the pamphlet published by the Women's Animal Protection Association; however, these in fact did not contain any reference to shechita, only to local, traditional slaughter practices.⁷⁰³ In the East Country, 'popular opinion' against kosher slaughtering was expressed in a number of local newspapers, spanning most of the political spectrum, however, most prominently in newspapers associated with the Peasant Party and the Farmer's Union [Landmandsforbundet]. One of the most extreme in this respect was the highly reactionary *Østlandets Blad*, a local newspaper published in the Follo district in Akershus County, but with a readership covering most of the southern part of Akershus County.⁷⁰⁴ The paper was edited by the schoolteacher Harald Holmaas (1883–1955), who also was leader of the local Peasant Party.⁷⁰⁵ Therefore, he must also have been a close associate of one of the Peasant Party's leading politicians, Akershus MP Jon Sundby from the neighbouring municipality of Vestby. In addition to highly anti-Semitic pieces on the kosher slaughtering issue, *Østlandets Blad* also maintained a strong anti-Communist line, and welcomed the fascist initiatives being made in Norway in those years.⁷⁰⁶ It also printed conspiratorial articles about the influence of Jesuits, and expressed strong intolerance towards the Catholic Church and Mormons, in addition to the Jews, of course.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰² Letter dated April 15, 1926 from Professor Hans Dahl to Minister of Agriculture Ole Bærøe, The National Archives of Norway, The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet V. Veterinærkontoret, Saksarkiv: No. 103.

⁷⁰³ See *Indlæg i dagpressen*, 1926, pp. 13–14.

⁷⁰⁴ Flo 2010, p. 387; Espeland 1934, p. 584.

⁷⁰⁵ Espeland 1934, p. 584.

⁷⁰⁶ Especially the National Legion, founded in 1927 by the merchant Karl Meyer; see *Østlandets Blad*, 22.07.1927.

⁷⁰⁷ See for instance *Østlandets Blad* 18.03.1927, 22.04.1927, 18.05.1927, and 21.07.1927.

In the core area of *Østlandets Blad*, two municipal councils unanimously voted for an anti-shechita petition to the Storting (Frogn and Ås) just a few days after the paper had published a highly demonising letter. In this letter, the submitter gave a detailed description of how Jews allegedly slaughtered poultry. The submitter claimed that the ‘rabbi or Jew-priest’ broke the bird’s wings and tied the wing knuckles together on the back of the bird, before the bird’s head was pulled and stretched through the opening between the tied wings and the back. As if this was not enough, the submitter further claimed that ‘the animal is stabbed down the throat with a pointed knife, following the rabbi’s having exorcised the animal and thrown it down on the floor’. This description had been told to the anonymous submitter by an eyewitness, who allegedly had watched how poultry was slaughtered in ‘the Jews’ secret slaughtering shed in a basement in Oslo’. The submitter meant that ‘the Jews’ cruel way to slaughter’ was ‘a relic from their sacrificial solemnities’, and explained their lack of sensibilities towards animals in the following terms:

Jews are still – despite their culture – in what concerns religion almost on the level of the ancient Egyptians or the Brahmins, and they often possess the oriental’s callousness for animal suffering, because animal suffering is so closely related with the religious sacrifices.⁷⁰⁸

This was a new variation of the animal protection movement’s insistence on the incompatibility of the ‘ritual’ with the ‘humane’. Not only was the Jewish ‘slaughter ritual’ cruel and inhumane in itself – the ‘orientalness’ of Jewish religion also made the Jews insensible for animal suffering, thus contributing further to increase the cruelty of shechita. This highly incorrect description of kosher slaughter undoubtedly contributed to make the members of the Ås Municipal Council to vote for a petition to prohibit shechita.⁷⁰⁹ In the minutes of the council meeting in question, a local farmer and council member explained how ‘cattle as well as poultry’ were slaughtered by Jews, and there is little reason to believe that his description would be any more balanced than the writings in *Østlandets Blad*.⁷¹⁰

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine every local newspaper covering the municipalities that petitioned the Storting. Even if the course of events suggest that the

⁷⁰⁸ ‘Indsender’: ‘Lovhjemlet dyrplageri’ in *Østlandets Blad*, 07.04.1926.

⁷⁰⁹ Incidentally, the petition was signed by Mayor Georg Sverdrup (1876–1945), a nephew of the former leader of the Kristiania Animal Protection Association of the same name. The younger Georg Sverdrup served as mayor for the Conservative Party in Ås from 1919 until the Second World War (The National Archives of Norway, The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet V. Veterinærkontoret, Saksarkiv: No. 102, file marked ‘Fra herredstyrer og dyrebeskyttelsesforeninger’).

⁷¹⁰ *Østlandets Blad*, 16.04.1926.

writings in *Østlandets Blad* contributed to the unanimous vote against shechita in the Ås and Frogn municipal councils, this does not necessarily mean that exactly the same happened in every municipality petitioning the Storting. However, the petitions, together with the negative attention in much of the East Country and in Trøndelag local press, indicate that a strong public opinion against shechita had risen in these regions during the spring and summer 1926. On top of this coverage, the press in the only two cities where there were Jewish religious congregations, Oslo and Trondheim, also devoted much space to the issue in these months.

Press Reactions in Trondheim and Oslo

In Trondheim the debate had started already in January after a local butcher, in a letter to *Nidaros*, had warned farmers in neighbouring rural districts against selling animals to Trondheim's Jewish community: 'As a professional I have the clear impression that kosher slaughtering is barbaric and not suited for our enlightened era'.⁷¹¹ This claim was met with objections from the Jewish community. Cantor (and shochet) Samuel Brandhändler engaged in a lengthy debate with this butcher in *Nidaros*, while the Jewish laywoman Marie Komissar replied in the conservative *Trondhjems Adresseavis* to several anonymous letters from animal friends and farmers. While Brandhändler based his argumentation on claims that shechita was as humane, if not *more* humane than stunning methods, Komissar raised the question of religious freedom, asking rhetorically 'who has really the right to interfere in commandments of another religion, and tell that we have no use for this in our modern times, away with it'.⁷¹² The argument about religious freedom would later win support among the Trondheim MPs, and even those who later opposed shechita in the Storting were obliged to frame their arguments in terms of religious freedom.

Especially Conservative MP and Mowinckel's successor as prime minister, Ivar Lykke, was responsive to the urgings of his hometown's Jewish community. Lykke, who at the time was president of the Storting and leader of the Conservative Party, had already in late December 1925, after Minister Five's premature press release, been approached by Brandhändler and the Trondheim Mosaic Congregation's trustee, Bernhard Dworsky, urging him to help the Jewish community after the sudden prohibition of shechita. Lykke must already have been known to be sensitive to questions regarding religious freedom, both since the Mosaic Congregation approached him in the first place, and not least since he promptly reacted by writing to the

⁷¹¹ Oscar Steen: 'Schächtningen i Trondhjem' in *Nidaros*, 16.01.1926.

⁷¹² Marie Komissar: 'Schächtningsspørsmålet' in *Trondhjems Adresseavis*, 16.02.1926.

prime minister. This was an unusual step for the person who constitutionally was second only to the king. Lykke, who, as the rest of the nation, still believed shechita had been prohibited by royal decree on December 15, 1925, suggested to Prime Minister Mowinckel, in a critical tone, that the prohibition was an ‘overly drastic measure’. He urged the prime minister to postpone the slaughter ordinance’s entry into force until the matter had been examined more thoroughly.

Lykke justified this request with reference to religious freedom, while simultaneously being cautious to distance himself from the Jews: ‘I am no lover of Jews, but as they have been admitted into the country in the first place, it occurs to me to be fierce in interfering in their religious ceremonies’.⁷¹³ As will be recalled from the previous chapter, Prime Minister Mowinckel already shared Lykke’s concerns, and had convinced a majority of the cabinet to postpone the ordinance until the difficulties regarding kosher slaughtering were solved. Even though Lykke and Mowinckel were close on such issues, Lykke apparently found it necessary to distance himself from the Jews’ having approached him by stating that he was ‘no lover of the Jews’. This statement underlines the tense discursive climate surrounding the issue – in order to appear as objective, and implicitly not manipulated in any way, Lykke had to emphasise that he did not ask the prime minister to do the Jews any favour, but only to act in accordance to his own liberal convictions.

Lykke’s support did not prevent the Trondheim press from printing letters hostile towards Jews. For instance, at the end of January 1926, an anonymous submitter in *Nidaros* claimed that Jews did not understand the intentions of their own religious texts: ‘Had they understood how to interpret “the law”, to find the spirit behind the letters, it might occur to them how shameful offences they have committed throughout 3000 years’. In the same letter, butcher Oscar Steen, who had initiated the debate, was thanked for his ‘revelations’, giving insight to “‘the Holy of Holies’, where butcher Brandhändler vivisects [vivisekterer]”.⁷¹⁴ Once more, animal protectionists equated shechita with vivisection, according to the old claim that most vivisectors were Jews. However, the most common strategy of farmers and animal protectionists submitting letters to the Trondheim press was seemingly to establish an irreconcilable difference between the Jewish slaughter method and the rural population’s

⁷¹³ Letter from President of the Storting Ivar Lykke to Prime Minister Johan Ludwig Mowinckel, dated Trondheim December 21, 1925 (The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet V. Veterinærkontoret, Saksarkiv: No. 102).

⁷¹⁴ ‘R. M.’: ‘Schächtningen III’ in *Nidaros*, 29.01.1926.

humane standards. For instance, the butcher quoted above claimed that ‘If this slaughter method was known to farmers, and especially farmers’ wives all over the country, I am certain that every animal sold for slaughtering would carry the disclaimer that it not become the subject of kosher slaughtering’.⁷¹⁵

Another anonymous submitter, presumably a farmer, given the pseudonym used (‘Agronomist’), claimed that ‘no decent Norwegian freeholder [odelsbonde] would send his dear animals to death in this way, neither cattle, calves, nor sheep, because *according to the Jewish ritual they are all ‘schächtet’, the whole lot, yes, even poultry*’.⁷¹⁶ The emphasis on the diversity and quantity of animals reinforced the notion of shechita as arbitrary violence, where no animals were spared, not even the weakest and most innocent. ‘Agronomist’ warned farmers in Trøndelag against sending their animals to the ‘Farmers’ Cooperative’ [Bøndernes Salgslag] in Trondheim, since this was a major supplier to Trondheim Jews. The submitter claimed to speak on behalf of the region’s entire rural population when stating that ‘it has not been in accordance with farmers’ intentions when [...] their animals have been exposed to Jewish animal abuse after being sent to the Farmer’s Cooperative’.⁷¹⁷ When in late February 1926 it became clear that the Mowinckel cabinet would not issue any slaughter ordinance at all, the same submitter blamed the cabinet for not ‘taking into account feelings among the meat-producing class, among whom the majority regards kosher slaughtering as gruesome animal abuse, unworthy of our enlightened society’.⁷¹⁸

Even though hateful letters appeared in the Trondheim press, it is noteworthy that no editorial articles treated the issue. Apart from letters from butcher Steen and animal protectionists, most letters, although anonymous, seem to originate from farmers in rural districts *outside* the city proper. Hence, these letters must be viewed as expressions of opinions found among the rural population in the two Trøndelag counties, rather than the urban population’s opinions.⁷¹⁹ In addition to this, the willingness of Trondheim Jews to take part in polemics strengthens the impression observed in chapter 3.4 of the comparatively high level of inclusion of the Jewish community and Jewish individuals in Trondheim’s public life.

⁷¹⁵ Oscar Steen: ‘Schächtningen i Trondhjem’ in *Nidaros*, 16.01.1926.

⁷¹⁶ ‘Agronom’: ‘Schächtning’ in *Trondhjems Adresseavis*, 13.02.1926. Emphasis in original.

⁷¹⁷ ‘Agronom’: ‘Schächtning’ in *Trondhjems Adresseavis*, 13.02.1926.

⁷¹⁸ ‘Agronom’: ‘Schächtning’ in *Trondhjems Adresseavis*, 13.03.1926.

⁷¹⁹ The issue was also taken up in some local papers in rural districts close to Trondheim, where farmers were warned against selling cattle that might end up at the Jewish butcher (see for instance *Sør-Trøndelagen*, 02.04.1927).

In Trondheim, the debate died away sometime early in summer 1926. In Oslo, however, most reactions occurred only when the cabinet, instead of adopting a slaughter ordinance, chose to submit a white paper to the Storting. In addition, reactions in the nationwide capital press must be characterised as much harsher than those in Trondheim's press, and there were hardly any Jewish voices. Especially the editors of the conservative newspapers *Aftenposten* and *Tidens Tegn* found interest in the subject. *Tidens Tegn*, the newspaper associated with the Liberal Left Party [Frisinnede Venstre], conveyed the most vicious attacks on Jews among Oslo newspapers,⁷²⁰ and had since the Great War printed highly anti-Semitic articles, mainly attacking 'Jew Bolsheviks'.⁷²¹

Despite its name, the Liberal Left Party was usually closer to the Conservative Party than to the Liberal Party, although it had broken away from the latter in 1909. Liberal Left Party MP and art historian Rolf Thommessen (1879–1939) edited *Tidens Tegn*, which during most of its lifespan was the country's second largest newspaper. Thommessen would later become leader of the Liberal Left Party, and when the party lost support among voters in the 1930s, he initiated collaboration with Vidkun Quisling's National Union Party. However, already in the 1920s, editor Thommessen and his paper sympathised with fascism, opposed socialism, and established ties to the peasant movement and the Peasant Party.⁷²² Thommessen also made his stance on shechita clear at an early point, declaring that the paper fully agreed with petitions against shechita submitted from 'various parts of the country'. Still, Thommessen realised that two important interests were at stake, religious freedom and animal rights, and he went far in defending the principle of religious freedom. However, in this case, he did not acknowledge the Jewish community's claim, and described kosher slaughtering as 'bewildered religiosity'. Thommessen instead defended the interests of 'a multiplied number of deeply religious natures, whose souls flinch by the thought of our friends, the domestic animals, being subjected to terrible sufferings'.⁷²³

⁷²⁰ The terms 'centre-right press' and 'centre-right parties' refer in this connection to most of the non-socialist parties ('borgerlige partier' in Norwegian), including the Conservative Party [Høire], the Liberal Party [Venstre], and the Liberal Left Party [Frisinnede Venstre], and the press organs associated with these parties. However, the Peasant Party is not included in the term, since the Peasant Movement's take on the issue is treated separately. Neither are the Labour Democrats, even though this was defined as a non-socialist party.

⁷²¹ Johansen 2006, p. 38.

⁷²² Flo 2010, p. 342; Ottesen 2010, p. 50. See also Valaker 1999.

⁷²³ 'Schächtning' in *Tidens Tegn*, 30.03.1926. Letters to the editors will be treated thematically below.

Also the editors of the country's most read newspaper, the conservative *Aftenposten*, took an early stance on the issue, proclaiming that kosher slaughtering was 'a crude and heartless treatment, which is outrageous, and that our society must hurry to put an end to. [...] In the name of all civilisation and decency!'⁷²⁴ The paper published several of the letters mentioned above, among other Lars Kjølstad's call. In the April 30 issue, the paper filled almost an entire page with anti-shechita letters, and included on the same page a story of a Jewish merchant in Oslo having gone bankrupt, and who allegedly had not kept his account books properly. The piece, having the title 'The Jew, who kept his books in Hebrew' had of course little to do with the kosher slaughtering affair.⁷²⁵ However, by placing such cases side by side, the paper contributed to strengthen prejudices against Jews, a characteristic move the newspaper became infamous for in following decades.⁷²⁶

However, by 1926, *Aftenposten* had already established a habit of printing anti-Semitic pieces. During the 1924 election campaign, the paper printed rumours about 'revolutionary Jews' and 'Moscow Jews' in order to smear the Labour Party.⁷²⁷ The year after, the paper printed a long interview with the anti-Semitic agitator Marta Steinsvik about her lectures on Jewish conspiracies and *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.⁷²⁸ Simultaneously with the kosher slaughtering controversy, the paper also published highly anti-Semitic letters by the mycologist and public figure Dr. Sopp,⁷²⁹ attacking Christian religious education in schools for its reliance on 'the immoral Jewish teaching'. Dr. Sopp also embraced Houston Steward Chamberlain's claim that Jesus was not a Jew by blood, and that Christ's teaching 'at its core is more Aryan than Semitic'. Sopp also found the opportunity to attack kosher slaughtering, along with circumcision, describing these practices as 'disgusting abuse'.⁷³⁰

⁷²⁴ 'Schächtningen' in *Aftenposten*, 15.05.1926. Letters to the editors will be treated thematically below.

⁷²⁵ 'Jøden, som førte bøkene paa hebraisk, som ikke kunde skrive norsk, men allikevel har hat norsk handelsbrev' in *Aftenposten*, 30.04.1926.

⁷²⁶ Johansen 2006. On *Aftenposten*'s and other conservative papers' predominantly sympathetic coverage of the Third Reich's handling of the 'Jewish problem', see Valaker 1999, p. 38f. and p. 70ff.

⁷²⁷ See for instance editorials in *Aftenposten* 14.04.1924, 03.07.1924, 10.07.1924, and 17.10.1924.

⁷²⁸ 'Jøder og jesuiter. Slip ikke jesuiterordenen og den jødiske storkapital ind i landet' in *Aftenposten*, 06.05.1925.

⁷²⁹ Olav Johan Sopp (1860–1931) was a pioneer of Norwegian and international mycological research. He was the first to suggest classifying fungi as belonging to neither plantae nor animalia, but to a third biological kingdom. He also contributed to the development of the Norwegian dairy and brewery industries.

⁷³⁰ Dr. Sopp: 'Skolen maa i støpeskeen. Også kristendomsundervisningen' in *Aftenposten*, 03.04.1926 and Dr. Sopp: 'Religionsundervisningen i skolen. Svar til mange' in *Aftenposten*, 11.08.1926.

The Agricultural Committee on Inspection

Back in spring 1926, petitions together with a large amount of newspaper articles convinced the Storting's Agricultural Committee to conduct an inspection on June 2 at the private slaughterhouse in Aker used by the capital's Jewish community.⁷³¹ For the occasion, a cow was slaughtered by the community's shochet. Although no journalists were allowed into the small slaughterhouse, the coverage of the inspection was overall negative. However, several committee members who had been present gave interviews shortly after the inspection, and the press described in great detail the committee members' appearance when they came out of the slaughterhouse. *Nationen* wrote that

It was a blood-sprinkled Agricultural Committee that shortly after returned from the slaughtering. Taraldset had bloodstains from his soles to his hat, Gimre a large stain on his cheek and Sundby all over his overcoat. Nobody had passed through untouched.

Conservative Hedmark County MP Otto Svenkerud (1873–1938) told *Nationen* that the entire process took 4 minutes, however, adding that the 'usual religious ceremony' had been omitted. 'Was it horrible?' the paper asked. Svenkerud responded affirmatively, claiming, however, that the slaughter method was not unfamiliar to him: 'I remember that it happened in almost the same way at home when I was a boy, and it was not pleasant to be reminded of this'. Peasant Party MP Jon Sundby (1883–1972) of Akershus County found the demonstration to be a 'rather grim situation', and noted that 'we have all reason to believe that it went considerably better on this occasion than it usually does, [...] since they had chosen a hornless cow. And as mentioned, the ritual was omitted'.⁷³²

Although negative, the assessments of these two MPs were far from as harsh as the reactions printed in *Nationen* and other newspapers in the weeks before and after the inspection. The emphasis on the omission of the religious rite suggests that the MPs had witnessed something else than they had expected. In fact, a disclaimer submitted a few days later by the Mosaic Congregation to most of the newspapers covering the incident reveals that the 'ritual' had *not* been omitted. In this official statement, the congregation declared that during the demonstration, 'none of the procedures were omitted'.⁷³³ The report in *Nationen* in fact contained little one would not expect from any slaughterhouse, regardless of method. Bloodstains on clothes would probably be unavoidable, even in a large modern

⁷³¹ See MP Johannes Bøe's thorough article on the subject in *Fremtiden* and *Opland Arbeiderblad*, 05.06.1926.

⁷³² 'Schächtningen demonstreres for landbrukskomiteen' in *Nationen*, 03.06.1926.

⁷³³ See for instance *Nationen* 05.06.1926 and *Arbeiderbladet* 07.06.1926.

slaughterhouse, where butchers and workers wear special clothing and large aprons. Therefore, the members of the Agricultural Committee used the alleged absence of the ‘ceremony’ to explain why the demonstration had not been as bad as expected. This perception also shows how efficient the animal protection movement’s agitation had been over the last thirty years, and how its perception of shechita had won the discursive hegemony.

This discursive hegemony is highlighted further in a *Tidens Tegn* interview with the Agricultural Committee’s secretary, Labour Party MP Svend Skaardal (1862–1930) of Sør-Trøndelag County: ‘Naturally, it was not a pleasant sight, [...] but I had thought it to be worse, and I think the descriptions of the cruelty of kosher slaughtering must be a great deal exaggerated’. Despite the ‘ceremonies’ allegedly being omitted, even Skaardal identified this as one of the main problems with the Jewish slaughter method:

This is also one of the major objections to kosher slaughtering, that the animal must watch all these preparations, the blessing of the knife, the exorcisms [besværgelsene] and so on, which of course gives the animal a horrible anguish.

Skaardal, himself a skilled butcher, was not particularly outraged over the slaughtering itself: ‘I have myself slaughtered thousands of animals, [...], and I must admit that it often took me a longer time to kill an animal’.⁷³⁴ This quote not only confirms the committee members’ negative perception of the Jewish slaughter method due to its religious character – it also reveals interesting notions of animals’ state of consciousness and rationality. From this statement, Skaardal must be understood as if he meant that the animals not only could feel tactile pain, but also could become emotionally disturbed by the sight of the Jewish ‘ritual’. Skaardal specifically mentioned the *religious* preparations as causing the animal’s anguish: ‘the blessing of the knife, the exorcism’, and not any other preparations, such as the casting. Thus, according to Skaardal, the animal must have possessed some kind of human-like rationality, not unlike the reasoning that made him suspicious of the Jewish ‘ritual’. If animals were able to respond similarly to the sight of kosher slaughter as Skaardal was, this implies that the Jews’ rationality and emotional sense were regarded inferior not only to Skaardal’s and his colleagues’, but even to the slaughter animals’ rationality.

⁷³⁴ ‘Stortingets landsbrukskomite studerer jødernes schächtning’ in *Tidens Tegn*, 04.06.1926.

Another Labour MP, the teacher Johannes Bøe (1882–1970), gave a thorough report to two Labour Party newspapers, *Fremtiden* in Drammen and *Opland Arbeiderblad*, published in his home constituency of Oppland. After having described the demonstration in detail and having given some highly prejudiced characteristics of Jews, Bøe stated that even though he already had formed his opinion, he had ‘thought it would have been nastier’. Despite this, Bøe was by no means positive to allowing shechita, and expressed a number of clearly anti-Semitic notions. He entirely dismissed the argument of religious freedom, based on the existence of non-observant Jews: ‘We speak little of religious reasons – think about the ‘Sabbath’ and the Jews’ adherence to this’, suggesting that if Jews did not even observe the Sabbath, why should the politicians pay any attention to kosher slaughtering? Bøe continued by asking rhetorically ‘Would the money Jews be dangerous?’, and made use of the now well-known argument of the majority’s ‘religious feelings’: ‘A part of our religion includes the animals. We should treat our dear friends the animals in a humane and loving way’. He had also asked the Jews present at the demonstration why they did not use the back part of the animal. Even though they explained that this was due to difficulties of removing blood veins from this part of the carcass, Bøe drew his own conclusions: ‘The back part is the most valuable, and as readers will know, the Jews live *of* and *for* business’.⁷³⁵

The talk of ‘money Jews’ and of alleged commercial interests behind the practice of shechita seems to have had a certain resonance in Labour Party circles, and this aspect will be addressed further in the next chapter. However, already now one may establish that also a number of labour newspapers took a negative stance on the issue as early as 1926, and contributed to disseminating anti-Semitic stereotypes. *Opland Arbeiderblad*, the local Labour Party newspaper of Johannes Bøe’s home constituency has already been mentioned. Another example can be found in the local labour paper *Arbeidets Rett*, covering the northernmost part of Hedmark as well as most of the southern part of Sør-Trøndelag County,⁷³⁶ including Svend Skaardal’s home municipality Ålen. *Arbeidets Rett* published a week after the inspection a fairly accurate description of shechita, although emphasising the attire and equipment of the Jewish butcher:

⁷³⁵ J. Bøe: ‘Jødeslaktningen – schächtningen’ in *Opland Arbeiderblad*, 05.06.1926 (see also *Fremtiden* of the same date). Emphasis in original.

⁷³⁶ The paper covered the old mining town Røros, as well as the Gauldal region in Sør-Trøndelag County and parts of Østerdalen in Hedmark County. Two of the municipal councils in this region submitted protests to the Storting, Holtålen and Selbu in Sør-Trøndelag.

The Jewish butcher (priest) now appears, vested in a white robe, armed [*sic*] with a mirror-polished knife, c. 35 cm long. The priest begins reading a silent prayer over the knife, whereupon he cuts the animals neck with a quick incision. [...] The entire ceremony takes place under great gravity and a profound silence.

By emphasising silence, solemnity, and the butcher's priestly function, it was the religious character of the 'rite' that received most attention, not the killing itself. Curiously, any unnecessary pain was not mentioned at all; however, the paper still condemned the act with strong words, referring to it as a 'slaughter method, which despite its horror, is protected by law in this country'.⁷³⁷

Also *Den nye Social-Demokraten*, the main organ of the Social-Democratic Labour Party, a right-wing breakaway from the Labour Party,⁷³⁸ printed in late June a highly hostile letter, combining religious criticism, stereotypes of 'money Jews', and prejudices against Jewish religious rituals. The anonymous submitter, claiming to have lived in the same building as the 'Jew-Priest', reported about 'terrible cries' from the 'priest's' kitchen, where Jews delivered chicken to be 'sacrificed':

The priest holds the chicken steadily between his knees and picks feathers off the chicken's throat, before inserting a long needle on a spot assigned by God (the law) into the chicken's throat [...]. 'Next up for shaving', thus keeps the Jew-priest on until all these miserable animals are executed, destined to serve the 'pious Jew' for dinner. The chickens flap around and scream and bleed to death slowly.

However, the 'Jew-priest' did not do this only to fulfil the religious needs of 'pious Jews'. The submitter also claimed that this slaughter was practiced to satisfy wealthy Jews' refined taste: 'these delicious 'Poulards', [...] are particularly appreciated by the wealthy Jew'.⁷³⁹ Thus, in the same piece, the submitter used images of both the religious fanatic and the rich upstart Jew to defame the Jewish slaughter method. Common for both these stereotypes was the Jews' inclinations towards excesses, religious as well as economic, both at the expense of innocent animals.

Some weeks after the inspection, on June 30, 1926, the Agricultural Committee recommended that the Storting request the government to prepare a legislative proposal on slaughtering. Only one committee member, Olav Fjærli of the Liberal Party, had been negative to sending the case back to the government, and meant that the government first should consider whether

⁷³⁷ 'Hvorledes schächtning foregaard' in *Arbeidets Rett*, 11.06.1926.

⁷³⁸ The two labour parties merged in 1927.

⁷³⁹ 'A. N. S.': 'Schächtning og annet dyrplageri' in *Den nye Social-Demokraten*, 24.06.1926.

it was possible to implement such legislation all over the country. Fjærli meant that in any case, the existing penal code's paragraph on animal cruelty still was adequate legislation. Despite Fjærli's objections, it was clear that the committee majority wanted a law on slaughtering instead of an ordinance passed by the cabinet. The committee's recommendations did not explicitly express a wish for prohibiting shechita; however, the recommendations referred to the many petitions demanding a prohibition of slaughtering without previous stunning.⁷⁴⁰

In the meantime, the press debates continued in Oslo, and reached a new climax during the summer of 1926 when a number of public figures became involved in the debate, such as the Aker chief of police, Johan Søhr, the anti-Semitic lawyer Eivind Saxlund, the Oslo bishop Johan Lunde, the explorer Nansen, and the author Hulda Garborg. More petitions were also directed to the Storting, and by mid-June, several nationwide interest organisations also protested against shechita, counting among these the national convention of master butchers, the Norwegian Women's National Council,⁷⁴¹ the Norwegian Agricultural Council [Det norske Landbruksraad], the Norwegian Farmer's Association [Norsk bondelag], and the latter organisation's women's committee, as well as several regional farmer's and animal protection associations. One petition had over a thousand signatures, that of the Lillehammer and Gudbrandsdalen Animal Protection Association in the heart of the East Country.⁷⁴² In addition to the petitions, the amount of newspaper pieces, letters to the editors, and editorials is considerable, and in the following, a number of representative types of argumentation used in the debate will be discussed in thematic order.

Hulda Garborg's 'Norwegian Sensitivities'

One of the local protests to the Storting also resulted in a letter from the author Hulda Garborg (1862–1934). Garborg had reacted enthusiastically to a protest submitted by the Løten Peasant's Association [Bondelag] in Hedmark County, and her letter to the association was published in *Nationen* on June 17. Retrospectively, Hulda Garborg is perhaps best known as wife of the author Arne Garborg (1851–1924), as 'inventor' of the Norwegian folk costume, the bunad, but also for her novels and plays. Among her contemporaries, she was regarded as

⁷⁴⁰ *Stortingsforhandling 1926. Annen del*, p. 335.

⁷⁴¹ An umbrella organisation for several women's rights organisations.

⁷⁴² 'Schäckningen. Landbrukskomiteens indstillinger. Henstillinger til regjeringen om endringer i slagteloven?' in *Aftenposten*, 16.06.1926.

one of the most important proponents of Norwegian ‘counter culture’, who in reaction to the traditional cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie civil officer elite emphasised ‘authentic’ Norwegian heritage and language. One of the centres of the *Landsmaal* and *norskdøm* counter culture was Hvalstad, in Asker outside Kristiania/Oslo, where in addition to Hulda and Arne Garborg, a number of other important countercultural intellectuals had settled. Here lived the artist couple Tilla and Otto Valstad, the editor Rasmus Steinsvik and his author wife Marta Steinsvik, the authors Rasmus Løland, Kristofer Uppdal, and Johan Bojer, and this milieu is commonly referred to as the Asker Circle. Hulda Garborg was also engaged in politics, and represented for a while the Liberal Left Party in Asker Municipal Council in the early 1920s.

In Garborg’s letter in *Nationen*, her main argument against kosher slaughtering was that the Jews’ and other ‘southern’ peoples’ treatment of animals was incompatible with Norwegian standards: ‘All heartlessness and roughness towards animals are contrary to the Norwegian national character [folkelynn], in spite of all sins being committed against animals also in Norway’. Garborg pointed out that not only Jews, but also Catholics were known to mistreat animals: ‘In the Catholic countries, people live in the blind belief that animals have no soul’. Consequently, inhabitants in these countries did not have any compassion for animals whatsoever. This lack of compassion was set in contrast with Nordic peoples’ attitudes towards animals: ‘Therefore we northerners always feel unhappy in the South’. The same was the case with kosher slaughtering, and that it took place among ‘us’ made it even worse:

Is it then not unnatural and meaningless that we are letting an alien people conduct official religious animal abuse in Norway? [...] When they wish to force upon us such a crude and ugly custom as kosher slaughtering, we must remind them that this is against Norwegian sensitivities, both religiously and socially’.

To this well-established notion of ‘southern races’ predisposition for animal cruelty, whether Jewish or Catholic, Garborg added a new element. The Jewish slaughter method was not only harmful to the animals, according to Garborg, but the presence of kosher slaughtering could threaten the future existence of Norwegian ‘sensitivities’ towards animals:

It is a shame, and of course demoralising for us to yield to this. Hospitality is a great thing, but it can also be abused. We do not let dangerous diseases freely into the country, but barbaric attitudes against defenceless creatures are lowly and simple and will soon infect the [people’s] character as a dangerous disease.

From this logic, the consequences would have to be that either all kosher slaughtering would have to cease, or Jews would have to leave the country. Then Garborg also ended her letter by

reminding the Jews of the old saying: ‘follow the customs or flee the country’ [skikk fylgje eller land fly].⁷⁴³

Garborg’s views on shechita in *Nationen* resemble much of what was advocated in the animal protection movement, and there are reasons to believe that Garborg had connections to the movement and had long sympathised with its work.⁷⁴⁴ In her friendship with the author and women’s rights activist Marta Steinsvik (1877–1950), the animal protection cause and anti-Semitism may also have found a common denominator. Steinsvik introduced the *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to a broad audience in Norway through a number of lectures held around the country in the early 1920s, and claimed in an interview in *Aftenposten* in 1925 that Jews ‘stood behind’ the World War. In the interview, she also suggested that the 1814 Constitution’s prohibition of Jews entering the country should be reintroduced to prevent ‘foreign capital, which is virtually entirely Jewish’ to gain power in the country.⁷⁴⁵ Steinsvik was also engaged in the animal protection movement, and was one of the main champions for abolishing vivisection.⁷⁴⁶ Surprisingly, she does not seem to have written anything on the issue of kosher slaughtering.⁷⁴⁷ This may be explained by the fact that while anti-shechita activists often labelled supporters of kosher slaughtering as vivisectionists, anti-vivisectionists viewed the struggle against kosher slaughtering as a competing project, and regretted that few anti-shechita activists were bold enough to engage in the struggle against vivisection.⁷⁴⁸

However, Steinsvik’s condemnations of Jews have much in common with Hulda Garborg’s husband Arne Garborg’s attitudes towards Jews. Garborg had originally been known to have radical and anarchist sympathies, but became increasingly more conservative and reactionary during the first decades of the 20th century. He remained an anti-capitalist, however, and drifted towards ideas of counter-revolution and anti-parliamentarism. As the literary scholar Heming Gujord has demonstrated, notions of Jews played an important role in the

⁷⁴³ Hulda Garborg: ‘Schächtningen i Norig’ in *Nationen*, 17.06.1926. See also similar notions of Catholic and Jewish cruelty against animals in an editorial in *Nationen*, 28.06.1926, as well as a letter in *Tidens Tegn* by Edvard Lassen (1882–1976), a jurist and principal officer [byråsjef] in the Ministry of Justice, and incidentally also nephew of the former leader of the Trondheim Animal Protection Association, Antonie Løchen (Steenstrup 1930, p. 255).

⁷⁴⁴ See for instance a piece in *Landmandsposten*, 10.03.1913.

⁷⁴⁵ ‘Jøder og Jesuiter. Slip ikke jesuiterordenen og den jødiske storkapital ind i landet’ in *Aftenposten*, 06.05.1925. See also Aasvagen 2010, p. 44.

⁷⁴⁶ Solbrekken 2012, p. 369.

⁷⁴⁷ Emberland (2005, p. 411) mentions Steinsvik as one of those who publicly opposed kosher slaughtering in 1926, but does not refer to any sources.

⁷⁴⁸ ‘Schächtning – vivisektion’ in *Tidsskrift mot videnskapelig dyrplageri*, No. 4, 1927, p. 15.

development of Garborg's political worldview. Already before the First World War, Garborg claimed that 'money Jews' were the world's most powerful people, and this notion was further emphasised by Garborg during the First World War. For instance, he thought that the war would not end as long as Jews could support the combatant powers with capital.⁷⁴⁹ Towards the war's end, Garborg identified the Rothschild dynasty as the real force behind the war in a piece in the 'countercultural' newspaper *Den 17de Mai*, edited by Marta Steinsvik's husband Rasmus Steinsvik, and with both Arne and Hulda Garborg on the editorial staff.⁷⁵⁰

Garborg had initially been positive to certain features of the Jewish people; however, he went from ambiguity towards belief in conspiracy theories about the Jews' financial power, also in Norway. In his diary, Garborg wrote that 'bank Jews' had taken over the role previously possessed by Danes and Swedes as occupying power in Norway. As the 'Vikings of our time', Jews looted Norwegian farmers, according to Garborg.⁷⁵¹ Heming Gujord claims that in Garborg's writings, the terms 'money Jews' and 'bank Jew' were not merely used as metaphors, but were founded on a genuinely negative view of the Jews. Garborg was negative to the Jewish component in Christianity, which he claimed continued to exist in Catholicism and 'clerical' Lutheranism. He consistently referred to Jesus as a Galilean, and identified the 'Jew' St. Paul as the source of the destructive Jewish spirit in Christianity. Towards the end of his life he even claimed that Jesus had not been a Jew at all, but was 'much older and more Aryan than Europe believes'.⁷⁵²

Gujord characterises Garborg's 'scepticism towards Jews' as 'surprising' and 'relatively unique in a Norwegian context'.⁷⁵³ Still, it is not surprising that some of the more intellectual criticism of Jews and shechita in the mid 1920s originated among Arne Garborg's closest family and friends in the Asker circle. In their literary outlook, Garborg and his followers found much inspiration in oriental texts, and were influenced by theosophy and eastern wisdom.⁷⁵⁴ The Jews, on the other hand, were categorised in accordance with Houston Steward Chamberlain's religious racism as 'Gegenrasse', together with Catholics and Southern Europeans.⁷⁵⁵ Thus, Hulda Garborg's attacks on Catholics and 'southerners' in the

⁷⁴⁹ Gujord 2002, p. 381.

⁷⁵⁰ *Den 17de Mai*, 21.05.1917, quoted in Gujord 2002, p. 391.

⁷⁵¹ Garborg 1924, p. 267.

⁷⁵² Gujord 2002, p. 391.

⁷⁵³ Gujord 2002, p. 392.

⁷⁵⁴ Bliksrud 2002, p. 396 and Dahl 2001, p. 140.

⁷⁵⁵ Gujord 2002, p. 390.

letter quoted above were perhaps as much founded on these notions as on the classical animal protectionist image of animal-friendly Protestant Northern Europeans in contrast to Jews, Catholics, and other ‘Mediterranean’ peoples.

A month after Hulda Garborg’s piece in *Nationen*, one of her neighbours in Hvalstad, and a fellow columnist for *Nationen*, the philologist, naturopath, and later founder of the Norwegian Vegetarian Association in 1930,⁷⁵⁶ Hans Jakob Røgler (1896–1988),⁷⁵⁷ claimed that Jews had offended the ‘Norwegian sense of humanity’ by maintaining kosher slaughtering. Røgler meant that every nation has its understanding of humanity, and ‘if anyone with foreign notions of justice [retsbegreper] offends the nation’s psyche, one hurts the very soul of the nation. [...] An important part of the Norwegian people’s psyche is its warm sense of humanity towards animals’. Røgler admitted that there also existed animal cruelty among Norwegians, but this was only ‘the exception that confirms the rule’. Røgler referred to this ‘sense of humanity’ as ‘holy and precious in the Norwegian national character’. He further proposed that the poet and national symbol Henrik Wergeland would be a proper judge about the issue. Wergeland had shortly before he died in 1845 fought for Jews’ right to enter and settle in Norway, but Røgler reminded that Wergeland also had been a great friend of animals. ‘Therefore, there should be reason to make Wergeland judge in a question regarding concerns for Jews versus concerns for animals: What would Wergeland have said?’ Røgler quoted a passage from Wergeland’s ‘Speech on the Humanity of Humans’ [Tale til Menneskeligheden i Menneskeheden], where Wergeland, on behalf of ‘mute brothers’, condemned ‘gruesome slaughtering’, which he meant should be forbidden by law. Røgler concluded that if Wergeland had lived today, he would have condemned kosher slaughtering similarly.

Apart from Røgler’s equating kosher slaughtering with the ‘gruesome slaughtering’ Wergeland knew from the Norwegian countryside a century earlier, his using Wergeland was a particularly harsh measure, given Wergeland’s importance for the Jewish community in Norway. In highlighting Wergeland’s name, Røgler explained that he hoped that Norwegian Jews would understand the severity of the issue, and he stated that Jews had to choose between ‘an outdated commandment surviving Mosaic Law’ and the ‘sympathy of the Norwegian people’. Were they to choose the former, they would also ‘taint the memory of the

⁷⁵⁶ Norges vegetariske landforbund, the forerunner of the present Norske vegetarforening. Not to be confused with Norsk Vegetarisk Forening, founded in 1903.

⁷⁵⁷ ‘Hvalstadåsen’ in www.ableksikon.no [accessed on 18.12.2013]; obituary in *Aftenposten*, 28.03.1988.

man who once was their best friend'.⁷⁵⁸ By proposing this dilemma, Røgler in fact constructed a double rejection of the Jews, suggesting that Wergeland's struggle for the Jews would have been futile if the Jews did not cease to use their slaughter method. By maintaining kosher slaughtering, Jews betrayed Wergeland and his legacy, and Røgler accused Jews for purposely offending the Norwegian 'sense of humanity'.

Also in local peasant-movement press, the notion that Jews had offended the entire Norwegian people persisted. A letter in *Vestopland* could reveal that 'A public opinion has risen all over the country', and the submitter used a highly demonising description of shechita. The practice was explained by the movements it allegedly caused: 'The purpose of this slaughter method is to force out as much blood as possible caused by the animal's wriggling [dyrets sprellen]'. This description echoes the widespread claim that the purpose of the Jewish 'ritual' was to make animals suffer as much as possible. Further, the submitter claimed that

Even if the animal should lose its consciousness with the incision, the remaining act, such as the binding of the legs, the casting, and prayers, are heathen ceremonies, which alone should be abolished due to the unnecessary anguish and pain they cause.⁷⁵⁹

Thus, preparations that by most parties were regarded as less problematic aspects of shechita were attacked most severely because of the preparations' perceived religious meaning.

Chief of Police Søhr and the Struggle for Public Morality

Also in *Aftenposten*, debates on kosher slaughtering continued unaffected by the Agricultural Committee's decision to send back the case to the government, thus postponing the case for another year. On June 9, the paper published a longer piece by the police officer Johan Søhr, chief of police in Aker and successor of the above-mentioned Johannes Fürst. Søhr was a leading member of the Oslo Animal Protection Association; however, in the public debate, Søhr framed the kosher slaughtering issue as a question of public order and morality, as his predecessor Fürst had done before him. For Søhr, the process against Axel Grün in 1914 was

⁷⁵⁸ Hans Jakob Røgler: 'Hvad vilde Wergeland si?' in *Nationen*, 13.07.1926. Also, a piece in *Vestopland* some weeks earlier had pointed out the Jews' betrayal of Wergeland's legacy ('Gr.': 'Religion og humanitet' in *Vestopland*, 22.06.1926).

⁷⁵⁹ 'E. O. A.': 'Schächtning' in *Vestopland*, 28.06.1926. The submitter also gave an account of slaughtering of poultry, which involved the notion of making the animals suffer purposely: 'Kosher slaughtering of poultry takes place in a similar way. During prayers, the animal is being plucked and cut in the neck, whereupon it is thrown into a barrel where its life ebbs away'.

evidence in itself of the intolerable character of shechita. He claimed that ‘criminal proceedings [straffesak] had been raised against the person responsible for kosher slaughtering’, and that the case had been dismissed on the condition that a prohibition of kosher slaughtering would be incorporated in a government slaughtering ordinance.⁷⁶⁰ In fact, the case against the Mosaic Congregation’s trustee Axel Grün never turned into criminal proceedings, because the investigating judge dismissed the case.⁷⁶¹ The judge had dismissed the case on the basis of expert statements by veterinaries Ole Malm and Halfdan Holth, and there had been no conditions related to the dismissal, as Søhr claimed. As will be recalled from chapter 3.3, it was Aker Chief of Police Fürst who originally had suggested to prohibit kosher slaughter through a government ordinance on slaughtering. As further will be recalled, Fürst’s idea gained support in the government only after the appointment of Haakon Five as minister of agriculture in 1921.

In his piece in *Aftenposten*, Søhr further claimed that the cabinet majority’s decision to postpone Five’s slaughter ordinance was ‘incomprehensible for most people in this country’. Søhr attacked Jews for insisting on maintaining kosher slaughtering, while having their stores open on the Sabbath: ‘How many of the present Jews – of whom nearly all are merchants – close their shops and businesses on the Sabbath, Saturday, the best day for business? I do not know of a single one’. In the same vein, Søhr rhetorically asked how many Jews ate ‘heathenly slaughtered meat’, and pointed out that there were only two places in the country where ritually slaughtered meat was available, Oslo and Trondheim. Søhr therefore meant that the religious argument could be dismissed, and accused Norwegian Jews of hypocrisy:

It is impudence beyond comprehension that Jews, who seemingly do not have much respect for their own ritual rules, can expect and demand the country’s citizens to pay attention to their meaningless and gruesome slaughtering ritual.⁷⁶²

Although this was the first time that Søhr publicly engaged in this controversy, it was far from the first time he attacked Jews in *Aftenposten*. In 1924, Søhr, in the capacity of chief investigator [Opdagelseschef] at the Oslo Police Department, corrected the newspaper’s claim that Russian Jews were flowing into the country. However, Søhr regretted that Jews unrestrictedly could enter the country until the 1917 Aliens Act: ‘In this way, we have

⁷⁶⁰ Politimester Søhr: ‘Schächtning og anden grusom slaktning’ in *Aftenposten*, 09.06.1926. Søhr repeated this claim also in *Aftenposten* 22.07.1929.

⁷⁶¹ Søhr’s claim has been uncritically cited by Johansen 1984, p. 63.

⁷⁶² Politimester Søhr: ‘Schächtning og anden grusom slaktning’ in *Aftenposten*, 09.06.1926. Søhr also repeated and sharpened his allegations in a response to Fridtjof Nansen in *Aftenposten*, 22.06.1926.

received a considerable and undesirable invasion of Jews'.⁷⁶³ A few years before the Aliens Act, Søhr had warned against a 'considerable influx of questionable [...] individuals of the international Jew type', who were suspected of pickpocketing and petty thefts, although it had been impossible to prove anything. These were 'cunning, skilled, criminals, who know how to protect themselves. [...] These are not vagrant Jews, these are Jews of the gentleman type', Søhr commented.⁷⁶⁴ In connection with a lawsuit in May 1926 against a Jewish lawyer, who among other things had worked against unfair treatment of Jewish immigrants, Søhr commented in *Oslo Aftenavis* that 'Bad elements of the Jewish race have poured upon us in thousands, especially from England, but also from other countries'.⁷⁶⁵

In reality, the entire Jewish population in Norway never exceeded 2,000 individuals in the period before the Second World War, and historian Marta Gjernes concludes that the Jewish population 'in Norway in general and more specifically in Kristiania [Oslo], was small, both in a Nordic and in an international perspective'.⁷⁶⁶ Despite the modest number of Jews, immigration of Eastern European Jews was considered a major problem by immigration authorities and police. In this context, Johan Søhr was perhaps the country's most zealous police officer. As will be recalled from chapter 2.2, scholars have regarded police surveillance and discriminatory measures against Jews around the First World War mainly to have been motivated by fear of spies and subversive forces. As head of the Oslo Police Department's bureau of investigation, Søhr was also responsible for the national police intelligence service. However, as demonstrated in part 3, the police's hostile attitudes towards Jews and other ethnic minorities (especially Gypsies and Travellers) preceded the war. An internal statement of Chief Investigator Søhr from 1917 confirms that his attitudes against Jews were not necessarily defined by fear of spies and subversive activities. Criminologist Per Ole Johansen quotes a letter sent by Søhr to the Ministry of Justice, containing a list of foreigners who had been impossible to deport. The list included several Jewish minors, who were 'regarded a danger or a very unfortunate influence on other children'.⁷⁶⁷ As we have seen above, Søhr also warned against the influx of criminal Jews, and he also claimed that 'gangs of criminal

⁷⁶³ 'Russiske flyktninger og indvandrende jøder' in *Aftenposten*, 07.07.1924.

⁷⁶⁴ 'Internationale forbrydere i Kristiania. Opdagelseschefen fortæller' in *Aftenposten*, 17.12.1915.

⁷⁶⁵ 'Nathansakens tredje dag. Politimester Søhr om jøderne' in *Oslo Aftenavis*, 15.05.1926. Incidentally, the trial against Einar Nathan had nothing to do with his complaining about the authorities' treatment of Jewish immigrants.

⁷⁶⁶ Gjernes 2007, p. 57.

⁷⁶⁷ Johansen 2006, p. 24.

Jews' were 'roaming around' the Scandinavian Peninsula.⁷⁶⁸ Thus, it was the immigrating Jews' negative features that were the real danger, and like his predecessor Fürst, Søhr also referred to Jews in similar terms as he referred to Gypsies and Travellers.

Søhr gained a somewhat legendary status after the First World War due to his involvement in the revelation of several spies and couriers operating in Norway, and not least because of his own account of those incidents in the book *Spioner og bomber* ('Spies and Bombs'), published in 1938.⁷⁶⁹ But after Per Ole Johansen's 1984 book on Norwegian authorities' attitudes towards Jews in the interwar years, Søhr's anti-Semitic notions have become known to historians. The journalist and police historian Jørn Kr. Jørgensen's entry on Søhr in the Norwegian Biographical Encyclopedia from 2005 remarks in an apologetic tone that

Søhr was also concerned with the immigration to Norway and its possible relation to different types of crime, and he put forward several statements which in our days would be characterised as clearly anti-Semitic [...] However, in the interwar period, harassment against Jews [jødehets] was not uncommon either in popular literature and press, or in public debate in general.⁷⁷⁰

In another article, Jørgensen characterises Søhr as a 'victim of the mood of the time [tidsånd]'.⁷⁷¹ Per Ole Johansen, on the other hand, regards Søhr's anti-Semitism as symptomatic of the Norwegian police's actions in the interwar years, and views this anti-Semitism as a precedent for Norwegian police officers' participation in detaining and deporting Norwegian Jews during the Second World War. This leads Johansen to regard Søhr's involvement in the animal protection movement as merely a pretext, and suggests that Søhr's engagement against kosher slaughtering was caused by purely anti-Semitic sentiments. Under the headline 'Chief Investigator Søhr as animal protectionist', Johansen writes that

Most animal protectionists were animated by idealistic motives. [...] However, other feelings were also revealed as the controversy escalated [...] People that from before were against the Jews now saw their opportunity.

He further quotes an interview with Søhr in *Dyrenes Ven*, where Søhr stated that 'Animal welfare has always interested him, and has a lot in common with police work'.⁷⁷²

⁷⁶⁸ 'Internationale forbrydere i Kristiania. Opdagelseschefen fortæller' in *Aftenposten*, 17.12.1915.

⁷⁶⁹ Søhr 1938; see also Vauvert 1931, Larssen 1946, and Bonde 1994.

⁷⁷⁰ Jørgensen 2005, p. 76.

⁷⁷¹ Jørgensen 2004, p. 98.

⁷⁷² Johansen 1984, pp. 63–64.

However, the relation between Søhr's role as police officer and his engagement in the animal protection movement was far more complex than either Johansen or Søhr himself suggested. Søhr never acted against kosher slaughtering as a police officer, although he at one point threatened to bring charges if the prohibition did not go through in the Storting.⁷⁷³ However, Søhr became involved in the animal protection movement well before the kosher slaughtering controversy entered public debate, and remained active in the Oslo association long after the prohibition was enforced in 1930. In fact, Søhr was elected leader of the association only *after* it was clear that the Storting would adopt the proposed prohibition. He remained a part of the Oslo association's leadership and the National Federation of Animal Protection Association's leadership well into the 1940s.⁷⁷⁴ He was also deeply engaged in the Federation's struggle for an animal protection law from the late 1920s.⁷⁷⁵ Thus, it seems likely that Søhr's involvement in the animal protection movement was heartfelt enough, and not merely a continuation of his preoccupation with Jews as a police officer. Whether it was the kosher slaughtering issue that drew Søhr into the movement in the first place is another question, but it does not seem unlikely. As we have seen from quotes above, Søhr did not only view Jewish immigrants as threats to national security as potential spies and revolutionaries – Søhr also regarded Jewish immigration as a problem of public order and morality.

In addition, Søhr was a central figure in the solution of the 'vagrancy problem' in the late 1920s. The Norwegian Mission for Homeless [Norsk misjon blant hjemløse] had proved insufficient in settling Travellers, and after an initiative of Akershus and Oslo County Governor Hroar Olsen (1859–1941), chiefs of police in Oslo and Akershus counties – foremost among these Søhr – formed in 1927 a committee on vagrancy. In 1933 this quasi-governmental committee submitted a set of recommendations to the Ministry of Justice. In addition to forced settlement of 'qualified individuals', the committee proposed that all 'vagrant individuals' should be registered in a printed index, that 'particular asocial vagrants' should be detained, and finally that 'inferior vagrants' should be sterilised.⁷⁷⁶ In brief, this would later become official Norwegian policy towards Travellers well into the 1970s, for which the Norwegian Government in 1998 publicly apologised and characterised as grave abuses against the Travellers.

⁷⁷³ Politimester Søhr: 'Schächtningen og det mosaiske trossamfund' in *Aftenposten* 02.08.1926.

⁷⁷⁴ Gierløff 1945, p. 103.

⁷⁷⁵ Gierløff 1945, p. 86.

⁷⁷⁶ Haave 2000, pp. 57–58.

Notions of Travellers and Gypsies similar to Søhr's were also common in the animal protection movement. Already in 1922, after the teacher and children's books author Lars Kjølstad had written a piece in *Riksmålsbladet* about Travellers' alleged cruelty against horses, the Women's Animal Protection Association submitted an appeal to the Storting about 'Traveller's mistreatment and neglect of horses'.⁷⁷⁷ At the national convention of animal protection associations in September 1926, Kjølstad compared 'our politicians' indifference' towards kosher slaughtering with the same politicians' indifference towards the Travellers' treatment of their animals. Kjølstad promoted the idea of prohibiting ownership of horses among Travellers, an idea that later was included in Minister of Agriculture Haakon Five's 1935 proposal for the animal protection law.⁷⁷⁸ Kjølstad meant that the authorities' failure to deal with animal cruelty among Travellers made the 'long-haired, stinking, fighting and arsoning bands of Travellers to feel as masters of the situation', and further allowed them to 'mistreat animals and extort [brandskatte] people in home and cottage around the country'. As Jews did in the kosher slaughtering issue, regretted Kjølstad, Travellers abused the naivety and weakness of authorities to obtain advantages, allowing them to mistreat their animals undisturbed.⁷⁷⁹

There is undoubtedly a strong resemblance between Søhr's attitudes towards both Jews and Travellers and the attitudes found in the animal protection movement. However, it would be too simplistic to conclude that Søhr was primarily driven by xenophobia in his measures as police officer against Roma/Romani and Travellers, or against the Jews in the kosher slaughtering controversy. These measures should rather be viewed from the perspective of improvement of public morality. In the process against Grün, arguments of 'public morality' rather than concern for animals were invoked by the Aker police. Also, Søhr had from an early point in his career been a champion for public morality, not unlike many other police officers. However, Søhr's engagement went deeper than that of most other police officers, and he engaged in public debates over several social issues and questions of public morality. Søhr was preoccupied with everything from problems concerning alcoholism and prohibitionism to

⁷⁷⁷ Lars Kjølstad: 'Umælende som lider' in *Riksmålsbladet* No. 8, 1922, quoted in *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1922, p. 26. The Storting forwarded the request to the government (*Stortingsforhandlinger* 1922. *Stortingstidende. Forhandlinger i Stortinget*, p. 314).

⁷⁷⁸ 'Ot. prp. nr. 3' in *Stortingsforhandlinger* 1935, åttende del. *Forhandlinger i Odelstinget* p. 11. The Storting did not adopt Five's proposal in 1935, but included a prohibition in a later amendment to the law in 1951 (*Stortingsforhandlinger* 1951. *Stortingstidende. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 320).

⁷⁷⁹ Lars Kjølstad: 'Det er Blakken og Bron' in *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1926, p. 69.

public housing, gambling, labour conflicts, and homeless youth.⁷⁸⁰ Already in 1916, Søhr warned against large working-class barracks of tenements as

a considerable danger for moral destruction of children and young people. One single individual, *one* despised or depraved boy can in these circumstances easily and uncontrolled [...] spread a moral disease with an unsettling range.⁷⁸¹

A year earlier, Søhr had characterised the influx of casual workers from the countryside to the capital in similar terms as he used to describe Roma/Romani, Travellers, and Jews: ‘The citizens of Kristiania are suffering from the influx of, so to say, the dregs of society from all over the country, work-shy individuals – in vast numbers they pour in during autumn’.⁷⁸² In an interview given in connection with his 50th anniversary, Søhr stated that during his time in the police, there had been considerable progress in Kristiania:

There are not nearly as much crudeness, brutality, and abuse of alcohol as earlier. The progress is, if not great enough, at least very striking. [...] And the main cause, I guess, is that people are drinking less alcohol, and that we have progressed in culture.⁷⁸³

Søhr’s engagement in reform issues is in several ways characteristic of the development of Norwegian police services from the second half of the 19th century. Following an English model, more and more fields of society and different kinds of ‘deviant behaviours’ came under the purview of the police, such as the struggle against ‘moral diseases’. With the professionalisation and modernisation of the police, new types of social crimes were increasingly dealt with by the police. Simultaneously, an increasing number of ‘deviant’ behaviours were defined as social crimes.⁷⁸⁴ Thus, Søhr’s opposition to kosher slaughtering fits into a larger pattern of threats against public order and morality. In Søhr’s logic, there was no contradiction between working for animal protection and working to limit Jewish immigration – both contributed to improve public order. In other words, Johansen’s questioning of Søhr’s motives for engaging in the animal protection movement seems exaggerated. In fact, there is not much evidence for a causal link between Søhr’s anti-immigration measures and his opposition against shechita. Rather, his engagement in both issues grew out of the same concern for public morality. Søhr’s highly anti-Semitic notions

⁷⁸⁰ See for instance *Aftenposten*, 08.12.1915; *Aftenposten*, 07.09.1917; *Aftenposten*, 13.04.1913; and *Aftenposten*, 17.06.1915.

⁷⁸¹ Gierløff 1916, p. 34.

⁷⁸² *Aftenposten*, 08.12.1915.

⁷⁸³ ‘Opdagelseschef Søhr om en politimands virksomhet’ in *Norske Intelligenssedler*, 06.09.1917.

⁷⁸⁴ Næshagen 1999, p. 155 and p. 186.

and statements were not necessarily the original source of his animal protection movement activism; however, these notions still played a significant role in his anti-shechita agitation.

As mentioned above, Søhr never acted in the capacity of police officer in the kosher slaughtering controversy, although he threatened to institute criminal proceedings should the Storting decide not to adopt a prohibition in 1926 (which he eventually did *not* do, even though the Storting failed to adopt the prohibition until 1929).⁷⁸⁵ Still, Søhr's engagement in the controversy is highly interesting because it says something about what kind of phenomenon shechita was regarded as in public debate. In addition to the sphere of animal protection and the purely anti-Semitic discourse on the subject, one may add a third type of argumentation, namely concern for morality and public order. This concern was already present during the process against Axel Grün in 1913–1914; however, it persisted throughout the 1920s as one of the chief motivations for prohibiting on shechita. Although Johansen's post-factum perspective of police participation in the Norwegian Holocaust makes him fail to acknowledge the entire context of Søhr's attitudes towards Jews in the interwar years, it would be misleading to conclude, as Jørgensen does, that Søhr was, so to say, merely a 'child of his time'. Søhr deliberately played on anti-Semitic motives, such as allegations of Jewish double standards and hypocrisy, money greed, and heartlessness.

Fridtjof Nansen's Intervention and Concerned Veterinarians

One of those who contested allegations such as Søhr's was the explorer, scientist, and national symbol Fridtjof Nansen (1861–1930). Nansen had already in January 1926 submitted a protest directly to Prime Minister Mowinckel after having been approached by Lucien Wolf of the Jewish Board of Deputies in London. Wolf contacted Nansen again on June 7, asking for Nansen's comments on a draft for a letter to the Norwegian Government.⁷⁸⁶ Nansen had little to add, but took the liberty to send his own protest to the Storting's Agricultural Committee.⁷⁸⁷ In his letter, Nansen emphasised his good relations with Jewish organisations and their support for his relief work during the Russian famine a few years earlier, and stated that he felt obliged to speak on their behalf. Nansen disagreed with objections raised against kosher slaughtering by mentioning that he himself had much experience with killing

⁷⁸⁵ Politimester Søhr: 'Schächtningen og det mosaiske trossamfund' in *Aftenposten*, 02.08.1926.

⁷⁸⁶ Letter from Wolf to Nansen, dated London June 7, 1926. The National Library of Norway, Collection of Manuscripts and Letters, Ms. fol. 1988:Q:6:F.

⁷⁸⁷ Letter from Nansen to Wolf, dated June 15, 1926. The National Library of Norway, Collection of Manuscripts and Letters, Ms. fol. 1988:Q:6:F.

conscious animals, and was convinced that animals ‘almost instantaneously lost their consciousness’. In so stating, Nansen must have drawn on his expertise within the fields of zoology and neuroanatomy, perhaps also on his experience from polar expeditions. Nansen also referred to works of scientific authorities such as Professor August Krogh in Copenhagen and the physiologist Leonard Hill in London, and concluded that ‘it must be considered as settled that meticulously conducted kosher slaughtering does not cause animals any unnecessary pain’. He ended his letter by emphasising kosher slaughtering’s importance for the ‘observant Jew if he is to fulfil the Mosaic Law’, and stated that a prohibition would ‘be conflicting with the principles that otherwise form the basis for our leading beliefs’.⁷⁸⁸

Nansen’s involvement on behalf of the Jewish community should not be regarded as solely the result of his good relations with Jews abroad. Nansen, together with other intellectuals in the so-called Lysaker Circle,⁷⁸⁹ was strongly opposed to the increasing importance of lay opinions in Norwegian politics since the introduction of parliamentarism in 1884. The term ‘lay judgements’ [lekmannsskjønn] was, according to historian Rune Slagstad, regarded as an insult among members of the Lysaker Circle, and Nansen himself characterised lay opinions as a ‘cancer disease on our society’. Nansen explained Norway’s material and spiritual backwardness as being due to Norwegians’ lack of respect for expert knowledge.⁷⁹⁰ The Lysaker Circle, whose members, including Nansen, mostly descended from nobility and the old civil officer elite, thus contested ideological claims of groups associated with the Liberal Party, especially the teaching profession, according to Slagstad. One might also include groups such as the countercultural milieu around Garborg, and other champions of ‘people’s culture’. Thus, Nansen’s involvement in the kosher-slaughtering affair should also be interpreted as a response to the shechita opponents’ reliance on lay judgements and subsequent distrust in the authority of science and expertise. Nansen’s protest was in the press

⁷⁸⁸ Letter from Nansen to the Agricultural Committee, dated June 15, 1926. The National Library of Norway, Collection of Manuscripts and Letters, Ms. fol. 1988:Q:6:F. The letter was also published in most of the larger newspapers the following days (see for instance *Aftenposten* 16.06.1926; *Tidens Tegn*, 17.06.1926; *Trondhjems Adresseavis*, 17.06.1926).

⁷⁸⁹ Dubbed after the Kristiania/Oslo suburb where Nansen resided among other intellectuals such as painters Erik Werenskiöld, Gerhard Munthe, and the historian Ernst Sars.

⁷⁹⁰ Slagstad 2000, p. 45.

mostly met with contempt and ridicule, even in nationalist and reactionary circles which regarded Nansen as a leading figure.⁷⁹¹



"The new Nansen" [Den nye Nansen] from *Nationen* 19.06.1926

The profession most affected by concerns raised by Nansen and the Lysaker Circle was, of course, the veterinary profession. However, Norwegian veterinaries were divided about the kosher-slaughter issue. Most veterinaries in academic positions supported the Jewish community's right to practice shechita, while a majority of the Norwegian Veterinarians Association's members, mostly district veterinarians, condemned kosher slaughtering. Also, the new head of the Veterinary Authority now sided with the critics. Just a few days after the Agricultural Committee's inspection in the Jewish slaughterhouse, the cabinet appointed Niels Thorshaug head of the Veterinary Authority after Halvor Horne. As will be recalled, Horne

⁷⁹¹ See for instance editorial in *Nationen* 17.06.1926, caricature in *Nationen* 19.06.1926, letter in *Nationen* 23.06.1926, three letters in *Aftenposten* on 18.06.1926, as well as 19.06.1926 and 22.06.1926. A letter in *Vestopland* on 22.06.1926 compared Nansen with the poet Henrik Wergeland, 'the first friend of the Jews here in this country', and asked sarcastically whether 'anyone thinks that Wergeland would have submitted a protest to the Storting as Nansen has done?' Wergeland was, as mentioned earlier, also known to be a great friend of animals.

(born 1866) had resigned due to ‘infirmity’, only 60 years old, and withdrew to his home district of Tynset in Hedmark County.⁷⁹² Horne had probably been ill for a while when he withdrew, and has in retrospect been characterised as a weak head of the Veterinary Authority compared to his immediate predecessor and successor. One of the chroniclers of Norwegian veterinary medicine wrote in 1969 that ‘Horne had a solid scientific background, but little contact with practical life’.⁷⁹³ However, with Horne away, resistance to a prohibition of shechita also disappeared from the Ministry of Agriculture. His successor Niels Thorshaug (1875–1942), who came from a position as a national horse breeding consultant, was much less sympathetic to exempting kosher slaughtering in the proposed law. Since Thorshaug never had worked in the Ministry previously, he probably did not feel obliged to maintain his predecessors Malm and Horne’s positions on the issue. Thorshaug was also a leading activist in the animal protection movement, and served as leader of the Oslo association for a number of years. He was much more of a ‘practitioner’ than Horne was – while Horne had dedicated his career to anatomical research and the years before his retirement on writing the history of the Norwegian Veterinary Authority,⁷⁹⁴ Thorshaug has been remembered for introducing the method of ‘stamping out’ (killing of entire livestock holdings) during outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease.⁷⁹⁵ With Thorshaug as head of the Veterinary Office, the possibility of reaching a prohibition of shechita seemed greater than ever before, and both the peasant movement and the animal protection movement applauded Thorshaug’s appointment.⁷⁹⁶

Still, with Thorshaug in the crucial position as head of the veterinary authority, many of the country’s leading veterinarians advocated publicly for exempting kosher slaughtering from the requirement of stunning. Professor Halfdan Holth of the Veterinary Institute in Oslo maintained his position from the case against Grün in 1914 that kosher slaughtering could be conducted responsibly, and therefore he saw no reason to forbid it.⁷⁹⁷ In *Aftenposten* and several other newspapers,⁷⁹⁸ Holth together with three other leading veterinarians and professor of physiology Sophus Torup appealed to the Agricultural Committee, urging its members to take into account the slaughter law’s possible consequences for Jewish citizens.

⁷⁹² *Nationen*, 05.06.1926 and Steenstrup 1930, p. 196.

⁷⁹³ Wirstad 1969, p. 293.

⁷⁹⁴ Horne 1925.

⁷⁹⁵ Wirstad 1969, p. 294; Folkestad 2005, pp.163–164.

⁷⁹⁶ *Nationen*, 05.06.1926.

⁷⁹⁷ ‘Schächtning-spørsmålet. Professor Holth ved Veterinær-Institutet uttaler sig’ in *Aftenposten*, 17.06.1926.

⁷⁹⁸ ‘Schächtningen. Der forlanges en sakkyndig utredning’ in *Aftenposten*, 02.07.1926. See also *Nationen*, 02.07.1926.

The veterinarians encouraged committee members to put aside complicated discussions on ‘biological circumstances’ [*sic*] and rather take into consideration that kosher slaughtering played a ‘very significant role for the religious conviction of many serious and honest men and women’. The veterinarians further emphasised the importance of letting experts examine questions of ‘scientific and practical, as well as religious-ritual terms’ before making a final decision. By emphasising these aspects, the veterinarians themselves meant that kosher slaughtering should not be judged by veterinary science alone. These veterinarians probably realised that the Jewish slaughtering method could not match stunning methods with regard to efficiency of killing, and subsequently the animal’s sufferings. However, when juxtaposing animal welfare and religious freedom, they believed that the Jewish method was within reasonable limits of what should be allowed without causing animals unnecessary pain or offending the surroundings.

However, these notions were not necessarily shared by the majority of Norwegian veterinarians in the 1920s. Many veterinarians were members of animal protection associations,⁷⁹⁹ and a significant shift took place in Norwegian veterinary medicine in these years, away from concerns of public health and economy advocated by Malm and his contemporaries, towards a stronger emphasis on animal welfare. As historian of science Kristin Asdal has shown, lay opinions increasingly challenged veterinarians’ expert authority during the first decades of the 20th century.⁸⁰⁰ Based on statements from 60 district veterinarians, the Norwegian Veterinarians Association submitted a negative response to the Ministry of Agriculture’s inquiry on whether shechita could be regarded as a humane slaughter method, and the association consequently recommended a prohibition.⁸⁰¹

Although the veterinarians who publicly protested against a prohibition of shechita, calling for expert statements on ‘scientific and practical, as well as religious-ritual terms’, were a minority among Norwegian veterinarians, they possessed the country’s leading expertise in veterinary medicine, and held influential positions at educational institutions. Veterinarians siding with the animal protection movement, on the other hand, were mostly district veterinarians. *Dyrenes Beskytter* characterised these as ‘practicing’ veterinarians, who had

⁷⁹⁹ Including three subsequent heads of the Veterinary Authority: Malm, Horne, and Thorshaug.

⁸⁰⁰ Asdal 2006b, p. 280.

⁸⁰¹ *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1926, p. 52.

submitted reports allegedly based on ‘first-hand experience’.⁸⁰² The claim that over 60 district veterinarians had studied shechita by first-hand observation falls of its own weight, considering that only a couple of hundred animals were slaughtered yearly according to the Jewish practice, in only two slaughterhouses (Aker and Trondheim). However, the term ‘practicing veterinarians’ was of course no arbitrary formulation. In the animal protection discourse, ‘practitioners’ and lay opinions were always trusted more than scientists and ‘theoreticians’,⁸⁰³ although more veterinarians of the latter group probably had first-hand knowledge of shechita (as opposed to the district veterinarians).

The leader of the Oslo Animal Protection Association, Emil Frøen, commented upon the ‘theoreticians’ appeal for an ‘expert committee’ by referring to Malm and Holth’s 1914 report: ‘We got the opinions of Norwegian veterinary expertise in 1914. There is no more need for this, or other scientific and theoretical and ‘expert’ statements, for that matter’.⁸⁰⁴ *Nationen* condemned the expertise even more explicitly: ‘No matter how excellent the expertise is – in this matter, it is us, the others, that count the most’.⁸⁰⁵ In this case, the ‘expertise’ referred to was that of Ragnvald Bugge Næss (1885–1953), district veterinary and later professor at the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science, Sophus Torup (1861–1937), professor of physiology at the University of Oslo, Per Tuff (1878–1966), professor at the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science, Halfdan Holth, professor at the Veterinary Institute, and Olav Skar (1880–1972), veterinary at Oslo Health Council. Incidentally, Skar later joined Vidkun Quisling’s National Unity Party, and was convicted for treason after the war.⁸⁰⁶ Skar was, however, one of the most ardent supporters of the Jewish community in the kosher slaughtering controversy.

In fact, one of few letters in *Nationen* supportive of the Jewish community’s right to practice shechita was submitted by Skar a few weeks earlier. Skar meant that it was understandable, even pleasing, that people reacted against a slaughter method ‘that may appear as upsetting as

⁸⁰² *Dyrenes Beskytter* 1926, p. 35.

⁸⁰³ Interestingly, in a letter in *Aftenposten* a district veterinary accused the animal protectionists of being theoreticians and of not having any practical experience (Dyrlæge Knap: ‘Hestekastration, schächtnung og “dyrevenner”’ in *Aftenposten* 21.07.1926).

⁸⁰⁴ *Dyrenes Ven* 1926, No. 7, p. 43.

⁸⁰⁵ Editorial in *Nationen*, 24.07.1926. See also the editorial on 17.06.1926 and the text accompanying the caricature of Nansen (see above) on 19.06.1926, as well as letters to the editor in *Nationen* on 23.06.1926 and 06.07.1926 for similar notions. For similar reasons, *Nationen* had previously also compared kosher slaughtering with vivisection. In both cases, ‘cynical science’ stood in the way of improved animal welfare (editorial 02.06.1926).

⁸⁰⁶ ‘Veterinær Olav Skar 80 år’ in *Folk og land*, 26.03.1960.

kosher slaughtering does'. However, Skar added that most accounts of shechita given in newspapers were inaccurate, and he reprimanded the press for using terms such as 'heartless, crude and horrible animal abuse'. With regard to the animal protectionist Lars Kjølstad's writings in April, Skar meant that 'to write such things is to commit great injustice towards a people for whom we have opened our gates with hospitality'.⁸⁰⁷ *Nationen* declared a week later that it would close its columns for further debate upon the issue; however, Kjølstad wrote a response in *Aftenposten* to Skar's harsh characterisation of his original article. There was little different in Kjølstad's letter from the the animal protection movement's usual argumentation; however, with Kjølstad's letter, the animal protection movement's rhetoric reached a new level of hatefulness towards the Jews. Kjølstad asked rhetorically if it was the guests who were 'to decide customs and order in the house – or the hosts?', and claimed further that Jews were 'self-invited guests', thus having lesser justification to demand 'special rights', such as kosher slaughtering. He doubted the 'so-called science' practiced by veterinarian experts such as Skar, and claimed that instead, it was 'we people of the countryside' who were best suited to judge in this matter. Kjølstad also rejected the notion of the issue's having anything to do with religious freedom, and bluntly compared kosher slaughtering with human sacrifices in archaic religions:

In delusion and misconceptions, ancient epochs made use of many barbaric ways to worship God. There was slaughtering of humans taking place, bonfire sacrifices; in the Middle Ages, self-tormenting. [...] To this sinister and primitive worship, kosher slaughtering also belongs.⁸⁰⁸

In his defence of shechita, Skar had applied religious arguments from both a Christian and a Jewish perspective, while also insisting on the principle of religious freedom. He referred to passages in the Pentateuch about slaughtering, and pointed out that kosher slaughtering was a 'holy act for Jews': 'We Christians regret that Jews still are bound by these commandments, but we have to respect their decided point of view and their "zeal for the law"'.⁸⁰⁹ According to Skar, Jews were bound not only by Mosaic Law, but also by the Talmud, 'which plays the same role for them as tradition and dogma do for us'. In a later response to Kjølstad's letter, Skar also emphasised the 'great concern for animals in the Old Testament', and that kosher

⁸⁰⁷ Olav Skar: 'Schächtningen' in *Nationen*, 22.06.1926.

⁸⁰⁸ Lars Kjølstad: 'Vore dyrs lidelser. Schächtningen, bønderne, dyrebeskyttelsesforeningene' in *Aftenposten*, 26.07.1926. See also similar comparisons by Kjølstad with 'Human sacrifices, negro slavery, the inquisition, death at the stake' in *Nationen*, 11.04.1927, as well as a piece by K. Wassem in *Nationen* 21.07.1927 on the similarities between human sacrifices in ancient sources and kosher slaughtering.

⁸⁰⁹ Olav Skar: 'Schächtningen' in *Nationen*, 22.06.1926.

slaughtering derived from these concerns, rather than from ‘sinister and barbaric ways to worship God’.⁸¹⁰

It was hardly coincidental that Skar was the only voice among *Nationen*’s readership who expressed concerns about a prohibition of shechita. From what is known of Skar’s background, his positions on other issues corresponded with those of the Peasant Party’s nationalist faction. From his publications in interwar years and later during the German occupation, one may distinguish a specific christian-conservative nationalism,⁸¹¹ also shared by many others joining the National Unity Party in its early phase.⁸¹² Some of the clergymen and laypeople associated with this party branch later condemned National Socialism, and left the party before the war.⁸¹³ Skar was, however, not among those who left, and apparently also believed in certain racial notions which were condemned by the party’s christian-conservative branch. For instance, he commenced his letter on kosher slaughter in *Nationen* by emphasising distinctive attitudes towards animals among Norwegians: ‘The love for our domestic animals is a beautiful characteristic of our national character [fedrekarakter]’. However, for Skar, unlike the animal protection movement and writers such as Hulda Garborg, this characteristic was not defined in opposition to ‘Jewish’ animal cruelty. Instead, Skar was concerned that a prohibition of kosher slaughtering ‘may force some of the noblest Jews out of the country. No orthodox Jew may actually enjoy meat slaughtered in the ordinary way’.⁸¹⁴

From Skar’s Christian point of view, presence of orthodox, observant Jews enriched the country. As Oslo Health Council’s head veterinary, Skar must have had first-hand knowledge of shechita, and might have learned to know the Jewish community in connection with his work. Much later, in an entry in the revisionist newspaper *Folk og Land* in connection with Skar’s 80th anniversary in 1960, his good relations with Jews were emphasised. Of course, this newspaper must be read highly critically, given its political affiliations and its struggle for rehabilitation of Nazi collaborators. However, Oskar Mendelsohn also mentions Skar in

⁸¹⁰ Olav Skar: ‘Schächtningen’ in *Aftenposten*, 05.08.1926.

⁸¹¹ See for instance Skar 1942.

⁸¹² Bruknaap 1974 identifies three main factions within the National Unity Party in the 1930s: the general nationalist or ‘fascist’, the national socialist, and the Christian nationalist. For the tensions over anti-Semitism between these factions, see Bruknaap 1974, p. 107.

⁸¹³ Austad 2013, p. 38.

⁸¹⁴ Olav Skar: ‘Schächtningen’ in *Nationen*, 22.06.1926.

positive terms, without mentioning his past in the National Unity Party.⁸¹⁵ In the struggle over the veterinarians' role, Skar most probably shared Malm's notion of veterinary medicine as being mainly a means for improving public health. Skar had specialised as a bacteriologist, and became internationally renowned for his method of counting bacteria in milk (known as 'Skar's method'), and also made a considerable effort to improve dairy hygiene in Norway.⁸¹⁶

Apart from professional qualms, Skar's family background may also be helpful to understand the apparent contradiction between his support for the Jewish community and his later National Unity Party membership. Skar descended from a branch of the renowned Skard family of Øyer in Oppland County,⁸¹⁷ one of late 19th and early 20th century's most influential families in Norwegian intellectual life.⁸¹⁸ He was a nephew of the folklorist Johannes Skar (1837–1914) and the philologist Matias Skard (1846–1927), as well as the clergyman and folk high school founder Christopher Bruun (1839–1920) through Bruun's marriage with Skar's aunt. Bruun was highly influenced by the Danish theologian N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783–1872) and his thoughts on the relationship between the 'people' (understood as the rural population), education, and national culture. For Bruun, the nation's destiny was determined by the future of rural youth, and he was one of the first to replace the traditional education system's emphasis on classical texts with an emphasis on Old Norse literature. By establishing folk high schools, Bruun wanted to bring forth a 'Norse rebirth' to new generations of peasant youth.⁸¹⁹ Although Olav Skar grew up in other parts of the country, and later studied in Copenhagen, his ideological worldview seems to have been greatly influenced by his uncle's grundtvigian Christian nationalism. There is also reason to believe the two had contact during Bruun's later years as parochial vicar in Kristiania.⁸²⁰

⁸¹⁵ Mendelsohn 1969, p. 580.

⁸¹⁶ Berg 1988, p. 173 and Waage 1991, p. 230.

⁸¹⁷ Incidentally, Ole Malm served as a municipal physician in Øyer in the early 1880s, before he obtained his stipend to study veterinary medicine abroad. Being a physician in a highly rural area, it seems possible that Malm knew the Skar/Skard family from these years.

⁸¹⁸ His father was Kristian Olsen Skar (1840–1915), who also had been educated a veterinarian in Copenhagen, and who before serving as county veterinarian in Mandal towards the end of his life (see 1910 census), had worked as a district veterinarian in various part of the country.

⁸¹⁹ Aukrust 1999, pp. 497–499.

⁸²⁰ Skar worked for the Kristiania Health Council from 1911, after having returned from studies in Denmark. A further indication of a close relationship between Skar and Bruun is that Olav Skar owned a portrait of Bruun, a copy of which he in 1971 donated to Vonheim, the folk high school Bruun had founded in Gausdal (Ramberg 1994, p. 142).

Church and Talmud

Apart from Skar, there were few Christian voices defending shechita in the press during spring and summer 1926. On the contrary, several influential prelates raised their voices against kosher slaughtering. Oslo Bishop Johan Lunde (1866–1938) spoke against kosher slaughtering in a widely distributed letter, signed at ‘The See of Oslo’ [Oslo bispestol] on April 30, 1926. In this semi-official statement, Bishop Lunde meant that Jews should give up the ‘barbaric kosher slaughtering’, since it was not in accordance with the Mosaic Law’s humane spirit. Lunde further used a scientific argument about blooddraining of slaughter animals to prove that kosher slaughtering ‘is not a necessary part of their cult, and may therefore be discontinued without any significant loss’.⁸²¹

Interestingly, Lunde, like Skar above, used the Pentateuch’s commandments in his argumentation. However, whereas Skar respected and encouraged traditional Jewish interpretation of the Law, Lunde put forward a classical Lutheran approach, referring to ‘the humane spirit of Mosaic Law’ as guidance for present-day Jews. This view was elaborated by another clergyman almost a year later in the evening edition of *Tidens Tegn*. Pastor Peder Christensen (1870–1939) had previously worked for the Norwegian Jewish Mission, and been educated a missionary at the Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum in Leipzig in the mid 1890s with the purpose of spreading the Gospel among Eastern European Jews.⁸²² Christensen claimed that Mosaic Law said nothing about slaughtering being practiced the way orthodox Jews currently did, and meant that the slaughter practice originated from Jews’ ‘immensely strong adherence to the Talmud and rabbinical schools’. However, Christensen pointed out, the Talmud was centuries younger than the Old Testament, and apparently not a reliable source of Judaism: ‘We have here one of the many striking examples of how traditional teaching and ritual dogmatism literally overrule Scripture itself’. He further complained that ‘Jews should themselves have abolished kosher slaughtering’.⁸²³ Thus, it was Talmudic

⁸²¹ *Dyrenes Beskytter*, April-May 1926, p. 20; Johan Lunde: ‘Schächtningen og religionen’ in *Ringerikes Blad*, 16.06.1926; item *Stavanger Aftenblad*, 01.07.1926.

⁸²² Christensen became the third Norwegian Jew missionary in 1897, but returned from Budapest shortly after his arrival, due to a nervous breakdown (Waldeland 1896, p. 96; Skarsaune 1994, p. 205 and obituary in *Aftenposten*, 02.05.1939). Christensen later served as an assistant pastor in Tromsø, where he also was editor of the conservative daily *Tromsø Stiftstidende* for nine years from 1910. As editor, Christensen had been characterised as ‘a hater of the home mission [indremisjon], *Landsmål* and prohibitionism’ (Ytreberg 1962, p. 413). In 1926 he became assistant pastor and later parochial vicar in Trondheim (Steenstrup 1930, p. 86).

⁸²³ Pastor Peder Christensen: ‘Den jødiske slagtemaate har ikke sin hjemmel i Moseloven’ in *Oslo Aftenavis*, 04.05.1927. Christensen delivered even stronger attacks on Jews after the Odelsting decided to postpone the case

dogma that made Jews remain ignorant, and adherence to shechita was a symptom thereof. It not converting directly to Christianity, the former missionary apparently meant that Jews would have to reform their religion, and thus Christensen applied the Lutheran principle of *sola scriptura* to a religion for which this thought was foreign.

Another high-ranking state-church clergyman, Dean of Oslo Cathedral Theodor Friehow (1863–1926), went a step further than his bishop (Lunde), and even contested the notion of religious freedom: ‘the so-called schächtning contradicts the sense of humanity, which should animate every Christian individual, to the extent that it should be *completely* forbidden in a Christian society’. Friehow hoped that ‘the wave of indignation now running through our people must not stop before kosher slaughtering in its entirety is prohibited by law’.⁸²⁴ The ecclesiastical criticism of Jews for their adherence to the Talmud was not newly arrived with the kosher slaughter controversy. Out of similar concerns, a number of conservative theologians and clergymen had in 1910–1911 been positive to Eivind Saxlund’s book *Jøder og Goyim* (‘Jews and Goyim’). They had especially appreciated Saxlund’s criticism of the Talmud, claiming that such criticism proved that Jews had other moral standards towards each other than towards ‘goyim’.⁸²⁵ Among those who had welcomed Saxlund’s accusations was another high-ranking clergyman in Bishop Lunde’s family, his uncle Herman Lunde (1841–1938), pastor of the Kristiania Trinity Church [Trefoldighetskirken], the capital’s largest parish. Although uncle and nephew belonged to different currents within the Church – Herman Lunde was open and culturally oriented, while his nephew stood in the conservative, pietistic low-church tradition – they seemed to have shared views on Jews. In the elder Lunde’s opinion, Saxlund’s book contributed to open eyes about the ‘Jewish character’ penetrating contemporary ‘spiritual life and materialistic development’.⁸²⁶

Bishop Lunde’s criticism of kosher slaughtering’s being an unnecessary part of ‘their cult’, has also striking similarities to a short piece by Saxlund in *Aftenposten* in February 1926. Saxlund demanded an answer from the Jews about where their ‘religious regulations’ were to be found, and claimed that he had found nothing about kosher slaughtering in the Mosaic Law

in July 1927; see *Tidens Tegn*, 16.07.1927. This, however, will not be treated here, because of the altered context the postponement had caused.

⁸²⁴ *Dyrenes Beskytter*, April-May 1926, p. 20.

⁸²⁵ Christensen 1998, p. 31.

⁸²⁶ Christensen 1998, p. 32.

‘or in the Bible whatsoever’.⁸²⁷ Since Saxlund never had received any answer from the Jewish community, he claimed that Jews were not willing to admit that the Talmud was the true source of kosher slaughtering. He also regretted that Prime Minister Mowinckel never had demanded documentation from the Jews about kosher slaughtering’s religious justification, and suggested why: ‘Of course, creditors are more difficult to deal with than creatures’.⁸²⁸

As will be recalled from the 1914 Aker controversy, Saxlund had then claimed in *Landmandsposten* that kosher slaughtering was one of the means Jews used to stay separated from ‘goyim’. Not surprisingly, the kosher slaughtering debate in 1926 once again gave Saxlund the opportunity to spread his accusations against the Jews. In addition to the letter in February, Saxlund also published a piece in *Aftenposten* on June 16 where he claimed to give an account of kosher slaughtering’s true nature. Saxlund wrote that the ‘Rabbi who imposes the slaughter cut’ carefully inspected the meat after slaughtering in order to identify diseases: ‘On healthy meat he places his seal, while for example tuberculous [meat] is discarded and sold to us’. Not only infected meat was sold to the ‘host people’, according to Saxlund – as a rule, the back part of the carcass was never eaten by Jews. Consequently, over twice as many animals became ‘victims’ to kosher slaughtering than the Jews actually ate. In addition, Saxlund claimed, Jews had according to Mosaic Law [*sic*] the right to sell animals dead from accident or disease to ‘goyim’. Despite this claim, Saxlund claimed elsewhere that kosher slaughtering had no foundation in Mosaic Law, having been ‘invented’ by rabbis in order to ‘pump out as much blood as possible during the animal’s terrible “angina pectoris”. Under the pretext of religion’.⁸²⁹ In this sense, Saxlund’s anti-shechita agitation played on anti-Semitic myths of poisoning and Jewish bloodthirst; however, his obsession with the Talmud and kosher slaughtering’s lack of biblical account resembles the argumentation of the clergymen quoted above.

In fact, recent scholarship shows that much ecclesiastical criticism of Jews in interwar years relied on anti-Semitic images. Fear of Jews as promoters of Marxist and atheist currents has been identified as the main motive behind ecclesiastical criticism of Jews in this period.⁸³⁰ As Einar Kjørven has shown in his master’s thesis, such images were especially widespread in

⁸²⁷ E. Saxlund: ‘Et spørsmål til jøderne angaaende schächtningen’ in *Nationen*, 02.02.1926. The letter was also included in the pamphlet published by the Women’s Animal Protection Association (*Indlæg i dagspressen*, p. 5).

⁸²⁸ E. Saxlund: ‘Litt om schächtningen’ in *Aftenposten*, 16.06.1926.

⁸²⁹ E. Saxlund: ‘Litt om schächtningen’ in *Aftenposten*, 16.06.1926.

⁸³⁰ Austad 2012, p. 25; Kjørven 2004, p. 77. See also Skarsaune 1994, p. 218.

the Jewish Mission. The Norwegian Jewish Mission [Den norske Jødemisjonen] was founded in 1844 with the purpose of bringing Jews to Christianity and thus preparing the Jewish people for its return to the Holy Land in the Latter Days. The mission remained a small, but influential organisation, and played an important role in the Church of Norway during the interwar years.⁸³¹ Church historian Oskar Skarsaune claims that the mission occupied a unique position in Norwegian Christendom, and was the second largest organisation of its kind in Europe after its British counterpart.⁸³²

In its attitudes to Jews, Kjørven has shown that the mission maintained much of the traditional ecclesiastical anti-Judaic criticism. However, in its assessments of contemporary Jewry, the Mission increasingly used rhetoric from modern anti-Semitism. Recently, it has also been suggested that the publication of the *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in Norway happened on the initiative of a lay preacher associated with the Jewish Mission.⁸³³ The church historian Øyvind Foss on the other hand, emphasises the aspect of spiritual renewal and conversion in the Mission's attitudes towards Jews. The Jews' only salvation lay in Christianity, and 'Israel' would remain in ruins and exile until Jews abandoned their customs, traditions, and interpretation of the law (i. e. the Talmud). Of course, the Mission's ultimate goal was conversion; however, Jews could still 'improve' by abandoning Jewish identity.⁸³⁴ For the mission and its supporters, reliance on the Talmud was an essential obstacle for receiving Christian faith. In addition, the mission's criticism of the Talmud was related to images of Jews as agents of atheism and communism. For instance, in a 1926 newspaper article, the influential missionary Gisle Johnson (1876–1946),⁸³⁵ warned against Jews' tendencies towards syncretism, where for instance liberal theology and Talmudic Judaism were mixed. Johnson concluded that a Jew wanting to receive Christ must renounce every aspect of Jewish culture.⁸³⁶ In a speech to his parish in Trondheim in 1932, the above-mentioned clergyman and former Jew missionary Peder Christensen explained the relationship between Communism and Judaism, claiming that the spirit of Communism was characteristically Jewish, and that Communism had its roots in Mosaic Law.⁸³⁷

⁸³¹ Kjørven 2004, p. 2 and p. 26.

⁸³² Skarsaune 1994, p. 8.

⁸³³ Aasvanger 2010, p. 70 and p. 77.

⁸³⁴ Foss 1994, p. 125.

⁸³⁵ Not to be confused with his uncle, the famous theologian and preacher Gisle Johnson (1822–1894).

⁸³⁶ Nilsen 2010, p. 103.

⁸³⁷ Mendelsohn 1969, p. 620.

In brief, Saxlund's attacks on the Talmud were by no means unique, and resembled the ecclesiastical criticism of Jews and the Talmud found in circles associated with the Jewish Mission. Some of the clergy's public condemnation of shechita in 1926 should be understood in this context, although not all of these were associated with the Mission. However, as will be evident from following chapters on parliamentary debates, there were also several 'men of the Church' who *defended* the right to practice shechita, and it is difficult to claim that the Church had any coherent position on the question at all. Still, the involvement of Lunde, Friehow, and Christensen shows that the ecclesiastical criticism of shechita went far up in the Church. Given Bishop Lunde's position as the Church's leading bishop, his declaration signed at 'the See of Oslo' was clearly not meant as merely another letter to the editor, but was intended as a declaration of official Church teaching. This was at least how the letter was interpreted among animal protectionists, and surely many other contemporaries.⁸³⁸ Most of all, Lunde's and other clergymen's involvement shows how the issue attracted representatives from widely different fields of society, each invoking different discourses and types of argumentation.

Conclusion

The majority of the Mowinckel cabinet's rejection of Haakon Five's slaughter ordinance and the subsequent white paper caused an unparalleled debate on kosher slaughtering in all major capital newspapers, as well as in the Trondheim press. In the local Peasant Party press, voices from the rural population together with those of animal protectionists expressed disgust for shechita. The press coverage resulted in a large number of local initiatives in the form of petitions directed to elected members of the Storting. These petitions' places of origin suggest a concentration of opposition to shechita in certain part of the country, which later was reflected in parliamentary debates in 1927, 1928, and 1929. So far, it would be sufficient to establish that the number of petitions was highest in the East Country, especially in the counties of Østfold, Akerhus, and in the interior East Country, as well as in the two Trøndelag counties. These centres of gravity are also reflected in these regions' local press, where especially the Peasant Party press agitated against kosher slaughtering. In the capital press, it was primarily *Nationen* that addressed the issue, but also the leading conservative papers *Aftenposten* and *Tidens Tegn*.

⁸³⁸ See for instance Lars Kjølstad's letter in *Aftenposten*, 26.07.1926.

The negative attention the issue attracted persuaded the Agricultural Committee to conduct an inspection at the slaughterhouse used by the Oslo Jewish community. Their subsequent reactions reveal the petitions' and press coverage's persuasiveness: despite their expectations of the 'Jewish rite' not being fulfilled, they nevertheless recommended that the Storting ask the government to prepare a law that eventually would prohibit shechita. Their action shows not only how the animal protection movement's agitation had gained the country's leading politicians' understanding and support. While opposition to shechita earlier had been dismissed as hysteria or hopeless romantic notions, the issue was now accepted as a political matter concerning the entire people. Animal protection causes' change of status among politicians did not occur as a result of increased reliance on science; on the contrary, it was rather a result of the increased importance of lay judgements in the Liberal Party state, and consequently animal protectionists' opinions ruled at the expense of those of veterinary experts.

The re-evaluation of the kosher slaughtering issue should also be related to the fact that the issue no longer preoccupied only animal protectionists. As demonstrated in this chapter, highly different kinds of groups, interests, and ideologies coincided in the kosher slaughtering question. For countercultural ideologues such as Hulda Garborg, the issue proved the superiority of Norwegian national character in relations with animals, which was contrasted to Mediterranean and Jewish animal cruelty. For the police, kosher slaughtering was regarded as a potential threat to public order and morality, and they therefore attempted to prevent it in ways similar to those they used to prevent vagrancy and other issues related to Travellers and Gypsies. Finally, shechita confirmed the notion of the Talmud as source of a number of false ideas and practices – everything from Communism and Atheism to animal cruelty. The criticism of the Talmud, having been conveyed previously by anti-Semitic agitators such as Eivind Saxlund and Marta Steinsvik, also found much resonance in ecclesiastical circles. Here, kosher slaughtering was rejected as something invented by diasporic rabbis, opposite to the *original* humane spirit of Judaism, which had survived only in Protestantism.

Given some of these groups' and individuals' status and impact on public debate, it is not surprising that topics raised in the press during spring and summer of 1926 reappeared in parliamentary debates in 1927, and the discursive interplay between press debates and legislators will be highlighted further in the next chapter.

4.2: 1927–1928: Parliamentary Debates and Voting Patterns

After a heated press debate during spring and summer 1926, tempers calmed in anticipation of the Ministry of Agriculture's slaughter law proposal being submitted to the Agricultural Committee, before the Odelsting (the lower chamber of the Storting) was to address the bill in June 1927. The Ministry's proposal and its subsequent approval by the Agricultural Committee provoked some press coverage; however, it was not until the Odelsting majority decided to postpone the bill for another year that letters commenced to flow into newspapers, and editors once more addressed the issue. This chapter will follow the legislative process up until the Odelsting addressed the bill for the first time on June 30, 1927. The Odelsting debate will be analysed with the intention of showing how arguments from the 1926 press debate reappeared in speeches of Odelsting members. However, new arguments also appeared during the Odelsting debate, which in subsequent press debates became paramount to previous arguments. After three leading centre-right politicians proposed to postpone the bill for another year, arguing that a prohibition of shechita might raise eyebrows abroad,⁸³⁹ Peasant Party MPs accused Liberal and Conservative MPs of being under the influence of wealthy Jews abroad. Thus, an important semantic shift took place in the debate, which from now on was centred on conspiratorial notions of the financial power of international Jewry. The obsession with Jewish interventions overshadowed for a while the main question of whether shechita could be regarded as animal cruelty.

The Odelsting majority's decision to postpone the bill should not only be regarded as a consequence of the former and current prime ministers' persuasive powers, and of course much less as a result of actual threats of reprisals from abroad. When analysing the MPs' voting in light of the preceding debates, it becomes clear that the postponement primarily was a result of the majority's reluctance to interfere in the Jewish slaughter practice out of respect for Jewish religion and customs. Between the parliamentary elections in 1927 and the Odelsting's second treatment of the slaughter bill in 1928, one may observe a slight turn in favour of the prohibition, mainly resulting from conservative MPs' changing sides. However, more interestingly, it becomes even clearer that certain constituencies stand out with regard to

⁸³⁹ Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivar Lykke of the Conservative Party, former prime minister Johan Ludwig Mowinckel of the Liberal Party, and the conservative chairman of the Storting's Foreign Affairs Committee and current leader of the Conservative Party, C. J. Hambro.

supporting a prohibition of shechita. This geographical concentration of opposition to shechita should be interpreted on the background of press debates and popular initiatives taken during spring and summer of 1926.

Others have already pointed out that during the final Odelsting debate and vote in 1929, the Peasant Party was the only party whose entire parliamentary group voted against exempting shechita from previous stunning, while other parties to various extents were divided over the question.⁸⁴⁰ Towards the chapter's end, it will be argued that when MPs' voting patterns in the 1927 and 1928 postponement debates are taken into account, it becomes clear that party divisions largely reflected the MPs' constituencies of origin, and to a lesser extent their party membership. In brief, Liberal, Labour, and Conservative MPs from the East Country and Trøndelag constituencies were more inclined to vote together with their Peasant Party colleagues than Liberal, Labour, and Conservative MPs from the South-West, West Country, and Northern Norway constituencies were. Most of the latter MPs favoured postponing the bill both in 1927 and in 1928, and to a somewhat lesser extent, favoured including an exemption for shechita in the final vote in 1929. This tendency is also found among MPs from the larger city constituencies (notably Oslo, Bergen, and Trondheim).

The geographical concentration of MPs opposing shechita in the East Country and Trøndelag is reflected in the continued press debates. In addition to the nationwide Peasant Party daily *Nationen*, the issue received most attention in East Country and Trøndelag local press, while the Conservative and Liberal press seemingly lost interest in the subject after 1927. However, in the months leading up to the parliamentary elections in October 1927, one may observe that parts of the labour press sharpened the rhetoric against Jews, and in similar terms as the peasant-movement press accused 'international forces' and 'money Jews' of having persuaded MPs to postpone the bill. The immediate precedents for these accusations may be found in a number of inquiries submitted by Jewish organisations abroad. Before examining press debates and Odelsting negotiations, the nature of these inquiries will be considered, as well as the Agricultural Committee's deliberations on the bill.

Protests from Abroad

While municipal councils, animal protection associations, and various farmer's organisations petitioned the Storting in spring 1926, the Mosaic Congregation in Oslo contacted Jewish

⁸⁴⁰ Mendelsohn 1969, p. 578 and Lorenz 2011.

organisations abroad and asked for their support. It is correspondence between Lucien Wolf and Fridtjof Nansen that suggests that initiatives originated in the Mosaic Congregation in Oslo. Already when Wolf wrote to Nansen in January 1926, Wolf stated that

We have received letters from the Jewish community in Oslo stating that the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture had issued an Ordinance abolishing the Jewish method of slaughtering [...] Our Oslo correspondent asked us to make direct representations to your government through the Norwergian Minister in London.⁸⁴¹

The same strategy was applied in Berlin and Paris. Consequently, important Jewish organisations in Britain, France, Germany, and the United States submitted protests to the Norwegian legations in these countries. Rather than illustrating the worries that Norwegian anti-shechita agitation had created among Jews abroad, these petitions were interpreted by some of the Norwegian MPs as threats, despite assurances from the legations that the letters should not be interpreted thus.

Although there is little in these letters allowing them to be read as threats, certain circumstances may have contributed to give these requests the opposite effect of what was intended. For instance, the protest submitted in common by *Preußische Landesvorstände Jüdischer Gemeinden* and *Deutsch-Israelitischer Gemeindebund*, two German umbrella organisations for Jewish religious congregations,⁸⁴² was signed by the banker Max M. Warburg,⁸⁴³ together with a number of other German-Jewish dignitaries from science and public life, such as Ludwig Stein of the *Vossische Zeitung* and Albert Einstein.⁸⁴⁴ From France, a protest was submitted by *Alliance Israélite Universelle*, an organisation that in anti-Semitic literature frequently was referred to as one of the main tools in a Jewish world conspiracy.⁸⁴⁵ In Norway, Marta Steinsvik had attacked the organisation in the interview she gave to *Aftenposten* in May 1925, claiming that the *Alliance* had ‘millions of members and centres in all major cities’, and that it had been founded by the French Jew ‘Isac Cremieux’ in

⁸⁴¹ Letter from Wolf to Nansen, dated London January 1, 1926. The National Library of Norway, Collection of Manuscripts and Letters, Ms. fol. 1988:Q:6:F. The contact between the Mosaic Congregation in Oslo and Wolf had been arranged by the British chief rabbi, Dr. J. H. Hertz, at the end of December 1925 (Wolf 1929, p. 7).

⁸⁴² Letter to Minister A. Scheel from Dr. Ismar Freund, June 8, 1926, The National Archives of Norway, The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet V. Veterinærkontoret, Saksarkiv: No. 102.

⁸⁴³ Max Moritz Warburg (1867–1946) was director of the family-owned bank M. M. Warburg & co. in Hamburg from 1910 until 1938, and also an advisor to Emperor Wilhelm II prior to the First World War.

⁸⁴⁴ Ludwig Stein (1859–1930) was a Hungarian-born philosopher, rabbi, and journalist. Stein studied philosophy in Germany, and later became professor in Bern and Zürich. In the interwar years, he was one of Germany’s leading Jewish journalists as foreign editor of the liberal newspaper *Vossische Zeitung* for over two decades.

⁸⁴⁵ Bristow 2005.

1861 as a ‘major external world federation’, aiming at Jewish world dominance.⁸⁴⁶ In reality, the Alliance had been founded in Paris in 1860 by the politician and lawyer Adolphe Crémieux (1796–1880) as a charitable organisation, helping Jews living under difficult circumstances abroad, primarily through the means of French culture and education. The protest submitted by *Alliance*, held in a polite and diplomatic tone, expressed disappointment with the Norwegian bill, hoping that ‘Norway would remain true to its noble and secular traditions’.⁸⁴⁷

The most significant protest came from the previously mentioned Jewish Board of Deputies through its Joint Foreign Committee together with the Anglo-Jewish Association. The letter referred to debates on the Jewish slaughter method in the UK and to exemptions from previous stunning given to ‘any member of the Jewish faith, duly licensed by the chief rabbi’. The protest also suggested that Norway, due to her strong endorsement of the League of Nations Minorities Treaties, was ‘morally bound to adapt her legislation in regard to her Jewish minority to the standard of justice and toleration required by the Minorities Treaties’. The letter was signed by the leadership of the two organisations represented in the Joint Foreign Committee, counting among these vice president of the Board of Deputies, Lord Rothschild,⁸⁴⁸ and council member of the Anglo-Jewish Association, Lord Swaythling.⁸⁴⁹ The presence of these names gave the impetus to a thorough comment by the Norwegian minister to the UK, Benjamin Vogt (1863–1947), who had received the protest in the first place. Vogt wrote that his ‘friend Lord Swaythling’ had introduced him to Lucien Wolf, who in turn had delivered the letter personally at the legation in London. Although refraining from making any judgement on the issue, Vogt pointed out to his superiors in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Oslo that the Jewish slaughter method was allowed in England, a country ‘where there is a very strong public opinion against every kind of cruelty against animals’. He also

⁸⁴⁶ ‘N. R.’: ‘Jøder og jesuiter. Slip ikke jesuiterordenen og den jødiske storkapital ind i landet’ in *Aftenposten*, 06.05.1925.

⁸⁴⁷ ‘que la Norvège voudra rester fidèle à ses noble et séculaires traditions’ (Letter to ‘Monsieur le Ministre de Norvège à Paris’ from Alliance Israélite Universelle, dated June 7, 1926, The National Archives of Norway, Ministry of Agriculture: Veterinærkontonr/-direktoratet. D. Saksarkiv. No. 102).

⁸⁴⁸ Lionel Walter Rothschild, 2nd Baron Rothschild (1868–1937) was the head of the British branch of the Rothschild family. Although Rothschild worked as a banker for the family-owned bank N M Rothschild & Sons for some years, his interests lay in zoology and natural history. He was also an active Zionist and was involved in drafting what became the Balfour Declaration.

⁸⁴⁹ Louis Montagu, 2nd Baron Swaythling (1869–1927), was like Walter Rothschild head of a leading British banking dynasty, but unlike Rothschild, was an anti-Zionist and opponent of the Balfour Declaration.

pointed out that the letter was signed by, amongst others, ‘the very influential financiers Lord Rothschild and Lord Swaythling’, and Vogt emphasised that

Jews still belonging to the Synagogue are still powerful in the finance world here, and some of them are rich enough to renounce banking profits, for instance in issues concerning acquisitions of public loans, if their religious convictions would make them averse towards the country in question.

Vogt noted that ‘these factors have of course not been suggested to me by Messieurs Swaythling and Wolf’, and should therefore be read as his personal assessment of the issue.⁸⁵⁰ Although Vogt’s emphasis on the importance of Rothschild’s and Swaythling’s financial power may have given the opposite impression, Vogt’s intention was undoubtedly to give a favourable assessment of the protest.

Trip to Copenhagen

Letters from Jewish organisations abroad were enclosed in the dossier prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture during the drafting of the slaughter bill. This dossier also included a report from a study trip to the Copenhagen public slaughterhouse, conducted by three members of the Agricultural Committee, Olav Fjærli (Liberal, representing Møre and Romsdal County), Johannes Bø (Labour, Oppland County), and Otto Svenkerud (Conservative, Hedmark), together with Veterinary Director Niels Thorshaug.⁸⁵¹ The delegation was accompanied by the Oslo Mosaic Congregation’s trustee Israel Jakob Gittelsen, who also arranged a meeting with Chief Rabbi Max Friediger (1884–1947) of the Copenhagen Mosaic Congregation.⁸⁵² The trip had been planned since the inspection at the Jewish slaughterhouse in Aker in June 1926, due to the unfavourable impression the narrow and crowded slaughterhouse had given. In addition to Rabbi Friediger, the delegation met with some of Denmark’s leading veterinary experts: Director Helsted of the Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinary Inspector Mørkeberg, and Dalsgaard, head veterinary at the Copenhagen public slaughterhouse. Dalsgaard told the delegation that he initially had been negative to kosher slaughtering, but had changed his mind after recently having modified the practice of shechita. Without violating having any religious prescriptions, Dalsgaard had

⁸⁵⁰ Copy of letter from Minister Benjamin Vogt to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, dated June 14, 1926, The National Archives of Norway, Ministry of Agriculture: Veterinærkontonr/-direktoratet. D. Saksarkiv. No. 102.

⁸⁵¹ The delegation was appointed by the cabinet by royal decree on February 11, 1927.

⁸⁵² The National Archives of Norway, The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet V. Veterinærkontoret, Saksarkiv: No. 102. File marked ‘Reise til København’.

improved preparations before the incision, especially the casting, and he now found the practice satisfying with regard to animals' welfare. Dalsgaard's conclusion and recommendation to the delegation was that kosher slaughtering should be allowed at certain suitable places where reliable control could take place, and where trained workers could cast animals using devices protecting animals against unnecessary suffering.

After the meeting, slaughtering of four large bovines was demonstrated for the delegation. In its report, the delegation described in detail all preparations, including Dalsgaard's casting method, and reported that the incision was made quickly with only one cut, less than half a minute after the preparations had begun. The report further commented that animals' corneas still reacted to contact 'several minutes after the incision had been made'. Despite the Danish officials' assurances, the delegation's majority concluded that compared to slaughtering with previous stunning, kosher slaughtering

appears only to a limited extent to be consistent with our notions of humane treatment of slaughter animals. The casting, binding, stretching of the throat, and finally the slow bleeding, accompanied by severe cramps, while there also is doubt whether the animal is unconscious, give a gloomy impression.

This conclusion was signed by Veterinary Director Thorshaug and MPs Svenkerud and Bøe. The fourth member, Olav Fjærli, wrote a dissenting conclusion. As will be recalled from the previous chapter, Fjærli had been against requesting the Ministry of Agriculture to prepare a slaughter bill already when the Agricultural Committee addressed Five's white paper in June 1926. Fjærli mostly concurred with the three other delegation members' factual description of shechita; however, he disagreed with their conclusion, and sided with Chief Veterinary Dalsgaard's conclusion that his modified practice of shechita was satisfactory. Fjærli admitted that kosher slaughtering visually gave a more sinister impression than 'modern slaughtering', but emphasised that 'death occurs within a reasonable time'. Fjærli added that he had the impression that 'the death struggle was not fought consciously', but these struggles were merely reflex movements. Fjærli concluded that he was convinced that 'modern slaughter methods with quick stunning [...] are more humane than kosher slaughtering', but emphasised that he also found that 'kosher slaughtering meets reasonable requirements with regard to humaneness'.⁸⁵³

⁸⁵³ The National Archives of Norway, The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet V. Veterinærkontoret, Saksarkiv: No. 102. File marked 'Reise til København'.

A Legislative Proposal from the Ministry of Agriculture

In its legislative proposal, the Ministry of Agriculture chose to follow the Copenhagen delegation's majority, and stated that the delegation's conclusions strengthened Five's white paper's assessment of kosher slaughtering as 'brutal and gruesome' and not in accordance with 'the Norwegian people's views on man's obligations towards animals'. Subsequently, the Ministry recommended that the new law should not include any exemption for kosher slaughtering from the requirement of previous stunning.⁸⁵⁴ The Ministry does not seem to have given much consideration to protests from Jewish organisations abroad, which the Ministry had received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs already in June 1926, together with positive assessments of minister Vogt in London and his colleagues in Berlin and Paris.

However, in Prime Minister Ivar Lykke's Conservative–Liberal Left Party cabinet, only half of the members supported Minister of Agriculture Ole Bærøe's proposal, while the other half, among these Lykke himself, opted for including an exemption clause allowing kosher slaughtering.⁸⁵⁵ The cabinet members who opposed the exemption clause and advocated a prohibition of shechita were, in addition to Bærøe, Minister of Defence Ingolf Elster Christensen, Minister of Social Affairs Peter Andreas Morell, and Minister of Trade Charles Robertson, all of the Conservative Party. The conservatives Lykke, Minister of Justice Knud Øyen, and Minister of Labour Worm Darre-Jensen, together with Liberal Left Party Minister of Finance Fredrik Ludvig Konow, all opted for the exemption. Apart from Lykke, who already in December 1925 as president of the Storting had expressed his support for the Jews in a letter to then Prime Minister Mowinckel, it has not been possible to determine with certainty what made cabinet members support or oppose the exemption.⁸⁵⁶ Their backgrounds give few indications, apart from the fact that Darre-Jensen (1870–1945) and Konow (1864–1953) were elected to the Storting from city constituencies. In Darre-Jensen's case, he represented the same city constituency as Lykke, and perhaps loyal to his fellow Trondheim MP, although Darre-Jensen eventually voted for a prohibition in 1929. Apart from Knut Øyen

⁸⁵⁴ 'Ot. prp. nr. 39' in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Tredje del. Proposisjoner og meddelelser*. Oslo 1927, p. 2.

⁸⁵⁵ 'Ot. prp. nr. 39' in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Tredje del. Proposisjoner og meddelelser*. Oslo 1927, p. 2.

⁸⁵⁶ Unfortunately, there is a major lacuna for spring 1927 in Prime Minister Lykke's own minutes of the cabinet meetings; see Lykke's private archive in the Gunnerus Library in Trondheim, No. 11:1,1 ('Protokoll for Ministeriets Lykkes regjeringskonferanser').

(1865–1942), who had served most of his life as a civil officer in the Ministry of Justice,⁸⁵⁷ cabinet members supporting the exemption were all businessmen.

Minister of Agriculture Bærøe, on the other hand, hailed from a family of landowning farmers in Østfold County, and worked most of his life either in higher positions at agricultural schools or as an estate manager.⁸⁵⁸ This was also the case with Minister Peter Andreas Morell (1868–1848), who was known as an innovative farmer at his estate in the municipality of Aker, where he also had been mayor during the local kosher slaughtering controversy of 1914.⁸⁵⁹ Defence Minister Ingolf Elster Christensen (1872–1943), originating from an old family of civil and military officers in Sogn and Fjordane County, was a decade later characterised by his party colleague Eyvind Getz as a ‘pronounced nationalist’ [utpræget nationalist].⁸⁶⁰ Christensen had also published together with his brother, the author and theatre director Hjalmar Christensen, a book entitled *The Fatherland in Light of the War* in 1916. Hjalmar Christensen had, due to his ‘Germanic racial consciousness’, been one of the country’s strongest supporters of Germany during the First World War,⁸⁶¹ and judging from their book, Minister Christensen must have shared many of his brother’s highly reactionary and nationalist inclinations. Hjalmar Christensen’s view on the Jews was not as dismissive as his Germanic worldview may suggest.⁸⁶² However, around the turn of the century he had expressed strong objections to ‘Mosaic mentality’, which he characterised as a ‘place where much oriental cruelty hides perverse and crude notions from a barbaric epoch’.⁸⁶³ Of course, one should be careful not to read Minister Christensen’s vote against an exemption for kosher slaughtering solely on the background of his brother’s statements over twenty years earlier. However, the pro-German writings of Minister Christensen and his brother at least give some indication about the ideological atmosphere characterising certain conservative circles.

Recommendations from the Agricultural Committee

Because of the cabinet majority’s disagreement with the Ministry of Agriculture’s intention to prohibit shechita, the cabinet submitted an altered proposal to the Odelsting. In the new

⁸⁵⁷ Haffner 1949, p. 787.

⁸⁵⁸ Steenstrup 1930, p. 80 and Haffner 1949, p. 169.

⁸⁵⁹ Haffner 1949, p. 503.

⁸⁶⁰ Getz 1935, p. 536. Christensen was to play an important role during the first phase of the German occupation as leader of the Administrative Council appointed by the Supreme Court.

⁸⁶¹ Bull 1935, p. 534.

⁸⁶² See for instance his assessment of Georg Brandes in Christensen 1905, p. 338.

⁸⁶³ Christensen 1902, p. 10.

proposal, § 4 gave the king the prerogative to exempt from the requirement of previous stunning in § 1. The proposal was then submitted to the Agricultural Committee for scrutiny before being addressed in the Odelsting plenary. Despite the cabinet proposal's exemption clause, the Agricultural Committee's majority, though 'for some, under doubt', preferred the Ministry of Agriculture's original proposal.⁸⁶⁴ The Committee explained its preference for the Ministry's original proposal by citing 'the attraction this issue has evoked in public debate, suggesting that there is a popular wish to finally adopt an appropriate law on slaughtering'. There had of course not been a 'popular wish' [folkeønske] for a slaughter law as such. As shown in the previous chapter, all petitions and press coverage were centred on the demand to prohibit shechita. Had there been a 'popular wish' for a slaughter law as such, the cabinet's proposal would have been sufficient. The use of such euphemisms suggests that the Agricultural Committee wanted to give the impression that the proposed law had nothing to do with kosher slaughtering, a claim later repeated in Odelsting plenary debates. However, as has been demonstrated in previous chapters, the slaughter bill's origins are mainly found in demands for a prohibition of kosher slaughtering. To turn the argument around: little suggests that there would have been a 'popular wish' for a slaughter law exempting shechita.

As with the Copenhagen delegation's report, also the Agricultural Committee recommendations included a dissenting statement from Olav Fjærli. Fjærli, together with Conservative MP Jakob Gimre (1865–1931) of Rogaland County, expressed doubt whether a slaughter law was desirable at all. Both Fjærli and Gimre originated from the West Country, although from the region's northern and southern extremities (Nordmøre and Jæren), respectively. Apart from their political careers, both were smallholders, and Fjærli worked most of his life as an agronomist and teacher in smallholder farming. He had been a central figure in the movement for farming of new land (Ny Jord), and ended his career as principal of the National Teacher's School of Smallholder Farming [Statens småbruklærerskole].⁸⁶⁵ Gimre on the other hand, was also manager of a local savings bank, and his position and statements on shechita later in the Odelsting plenary debate suggest that he belonged to the pietistic low-church movement common in his home region of Jæren.⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶⁴ 'Innst. O. XX. (1927)' in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Sjette del. Instillinger og beslutninger*, p. 2.

⁸⁶⁵ Steenstrup 1930, p. 123 and Haffner 1949, p. 230.

⁸⁶⁶ See his speech in the Odelsting on June 30, 1927, quoted below. Although a farmer, Gimre is referred to as part of the more educated 'bourgeoisie' elite of the Rogaland Conservative Party, which otherwise had a large majority of farmers (Gjesteland 1979, p. 58).

In their dissenting statement, Fjærli and Gimre feared that a slaughter law would be ‘a rigid means which is cumbersome to change as one learns from experience’, and that its compliance would be difficult to control, especially in distant regions. Most of Fjærli and Gimre’s dissenting statement, however, concerned kosher slaughtering. The two meant that it should be possible to find a solution ‘satisfying concerns regarding animal protection which at the same time allows Jews to live in accordance with their religious commandments’. The two proposed that the issue should be further examined and therefore postponed another year.⁸⁶⁷ They further claimed that kosher slaughtering was possible to practice in a way that ‘secured the animal an entirely humane treatment’, and pointed out that animals could be casted using devices eliminating most suffering related to this part of the practice. With regard to the question whether animals were conscious after the incision, and if so, for how long, the two admitted that it was far from certain that consciousness disappeared immediately. However, they also referred to a method developed by the director of the Swedish Scool of Veterinary Medicine, Professor Vilhelm Sahlstedt (1879–1960). With Sahlstedt’s method, animals were stunned immediately after the incision, and the method was accepted by the Jewish community in Sweden. Under these circumstances, argued Fjærli and Gimre, the practice of kosher slaughtering should be allowed under the new slaughter law out of respect for the Jewish minority. Their statement ended with a plea for religious freedom:

For a long time, we have supported principles of freedom of thought and freedom of religion in this country. Subsequently, we should not prevent a group of Norwegian citizens from living according to their religion.⁸⁶⁸

Their dissenting statement and proposal were accompanied by a dossier of eight documents, all positive to allowing the continued practice of shechita in Norway. Among the documents were statements of physiology professor Sophus Torup, Professor Halfdan Holth of the Veterinary Institute in Oslo, Professor August Krohg, and Copenhagen veterinary inspector Harald Mørkeberg, along with pleas and pamphlets submitted by the Mosaic Congregation.⁸⁶⁹

Although the Agricultural Committee’s two dissenting members also mentioned other concerns, such as problems associated with compliance of the proposed law, and possible

⁸⁶⁷ ‘Innst. O. XX. (1927)’ in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Sjette del. Instillinger og beslutninger*, p. 2.

⁸⁶⁸ ‘Innst. O. XX. (1927)’ in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Sjette del. Instillinger og beslutninger*, p. 7.

⁸⁶⁹ ‘Dokument nr. 18’ in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Femte del. Dokumenter* and Archives of the Storting: Bilag til Odelstinget 1929, file marked ‘Schächtningen’.

problems for meat producers wishing to export bacon to the UK,⁸⁷⁰ the real concern of the two was undoubtedly the Jewish community's interests. Fjærli had already raised this concern a year earlier in connection with Minister Five's white paper, while both Fjærli and Gimre would engage in the Odelsting plenary debate later the same year. Fjærli and Gimre also referred to protests from Jewish organisations abroad, and pointed out that a prohibition of shechita might conflict with the 'standard of justice and tolerance required by the Minorities Treaties'.⁸⁷¹

Negotiations in the Odelsting

Despite the cabinet majority's opposition and the overwhelming material presented by Gimre and Fjærli in favour of allowing shechita, the Agricultural Committee's majority favoured the Ministry of Agriculture's original proposal, and on June 30, 1927, the slaughter bill was addressed for the first time in a plenary meeting of the Storting's lower chamber. The proceedings commenced with a plea from Prime Minister Lykke not to address the present proposal in the current Odelsting session, and instead to defer the bill for another year. After the cabinet had submitted its legislative proposal a few months earlier, Lykke had been assisting both the Mosaic Congregation and Olav Fjærli in their efforts to turn public opinion and the Odelsting majority in favour of allowing kosher slaughtering. Despite doing this, Lykke still expressed pessimism about the exemption in an April letter to the Mosaic Congregation's trustee Israel Gittelsen.⁸⁷² In a comment to Fjærli's draft of his dissenting statement, Lykke advised Fjærli not to exaggerate his praise of Jewish animal friendliness. Lykke meant that Fjærli's positive characterisation of Jews might not 'find much resonance in large parts of the population'.⁸⁷³ This statement has been interpreted by Per Ole Johansen as a sign of ambiguity towards the Jews,⁸⁷⁴ but given Lykke's efforts for an exemption clause, it should rather be read as a cold, factual assessment of the case.

Lykke's contribution in Odelsting debates should remove any doubt of his sentiments towards Jews. Lykke continued his opening address by identifying kosher slaughtering as the salient

⁸⁷⁰ 'Innst. O. XX. (1927)' in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Sjette del. Instillinger og beslutninger*, p. 3. The objection was based on the false conception that only meat slaughtered according to the Danish-American method would be sellable in Britain.

⁸⁷¹ 'Innst. O. XX. (1927)' in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Sjette del. Instillinger og beslutninger*, p. 2.

⁸⁷² Letter to I. Gittelsen, dated 13.04.1927 in the Gunnerus Library, Special Collections, Private Archive of Ivar Lykke, No. 12:4.

⁸⁷³ Letter to Olav Fjærli, dated 14.06.1927 in the Gunnerus Library, Special Collections, Private Archive of Ivar Lykke, No. 13:1

⁸⁷⁴ Johansen 1984, p. 69.

point in disagreements over the slaughtering bill, within both Mowinckel's and his own cabinet, as well as in the Agricultural Committee. He emphasised the proposed law's consequences for the nation's Jewish minority. In addition, Lykke meant that prohibiting kosher slaughtering would be to commit a 'sin against one of the leading principles of the League of Nations, namely the protection of minorities'. Because of Lykke's postponement proposal, the president instructed MPs in the first instance to discuss whether to postpone the bill, and *not* to touch upon the factual aspects of the bill.⁸⁷⁵ Despite this, most of the Odelsting debate that afternoon centred on the question of prohibiting shechita. In the following paragraphs, different arguments pro and con prohibiting kosher slaughtering will be discussed in thematical order, and will be related to the 1926 press debates discussed in the previous chapter.

Lay Opinions vs Expert Statements

As was shown in the previous chapter, the large amount of petitions and press coverage Five's white paper had created during spring 1926 had convinced the Agricultural Committee to arrange a demonstration of shechita in the Oslo Jewish community's slaughterhouse in Aker. Some committee members had claimed that there existed a 'popular demand' for prohibiting kosher slaughter that they not could ignore. On the background of the continued, even intensified, press debates after the committee's inspection in Aker, the notion of a 'popular demand' was also one of the main arguments in the Odelsting debate.⁸⁷⁶ Haakon Five, now speaking as Liberal Party MP for Nord-Trøndelag County, argued that the demand's long history in itself was a reason to prohibit kosher slaughtering, and that the demand by now 'had gained general support among the entire Norwegian people'.⁸⁷⁷ Jon Sundby of the Peasant Party followed up by establishing that the issue already had been thoroughly discussed, and therefore needed no further consideration:

This issue was raised already in 1911, and around 1913–1914 [...] it was vehemently debated in all newspapers and in different camps around the country. [...] There are certainly few cases we address that are elaborated by statements and people's opinions to the same extent as this.⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁷⁵ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1097.

⁸⁷⁶ The notion of a 'popular demand' was also disseminated in the peasant-movement press; see for instance *Nationen*, 11.04.1927 or *Østlandets Blad*, 28.06.1926, claiming that 'the people' were 'brewing in resentment, both townsmen and peasants'.

⁸⁷⁷ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1103.

⁸⁷⁸ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1101.

Sundby claimed that ‘the people’ had made up its mind a long time ago, and that petitions from municipal councils proved this. He even claimed to know what the outcome of a plebiscite over the issue would be: ‘If we would have a plebiscite, we would immediately realise what the people’s sense of justice is’.⁸⁷⁹

Svend Skaardal, the Agricultural Committee’s Labour Party secretary, supported Sundby’s claim, and added that ‘in my county, perhaps as many as half of the municipal councils have protested against the continuation of kosher slaughtering’.⁸⁸⁰ Although Skaardal exaggerated the number of protests from his home county of Sør-Trøndelag, he still represented the county that had submitted most petitions per capita.⁸⁸¹ Five Sør-Trøndelag municipalities had protested against shechita, among those Skaardal’s home municipality Ålen. Thus, there should be no surprise that Skaardal was among the most eager to avoid an exemption for shechita.⁸⁸² Also Sundby hailed from one of the regions where the number of municipal councils petitioning the Storting was among the highest, namely the rural areas south-east of the capital in Akershus County’s Follo district and in neighbouring Østfold County, where the Peasant Party had much of its electoral strength. The notion of a ‘people’s wish’ was contested by Communist Party MP Sverre Støstad, representing the Trondheim city constituency, who claimed that ‘certain quarters are attempting to create a people’s wish’.⁸⁸³ Olav Fjærli identified these ‘certain quarters’ as the press: ‘It is a press eager for sensation that has agitated the mood. It has conveyed false descriptions, and unfortunately, people believe them’.⁸⁸⁴

In a sense, both sides were right. In certain areas, predominantly in the East Country and in Trøndelag – where Sundby and Skaardal hailed from, respectively – opposition against kosher slaughter had certain strength, with regard both to number of petitions and to protests in the local press. Inversely, no petitions had been submitted from municipal councils in Støstad’s and Fjærli’s home constituencies, even though there had been a heated debate in the Trondheim press. However, as pointed out in the previous chapter, the Trondheim press was the most generous in letting through voices from the Jewish community, and letters

⁸⁷⁹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1108.

⁸⁸⁰ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1104.

⁸⁸¹ Only from Østfold more petitions were submitted by municipal councils (7).

⁸⁸² Archives of the Storting: Stortingets Ekstraktprotokoll, 1926, No. 434.

⁸⁸³ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1099.

⁸⁸⁴ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1106.

advocating a prohibition mainly originated in rural districts outside the city proper. However, the ‘popular demand’ was not only a question of numbers of petitions or letters to the editor. Perhaps to a greater extent it was a question of *who* was rightful to judge concerning kosher slaughter: the ‘people’ or the experts? In the 1926 debate, figures such as Fridtjof Nansen had added confidence to expert statements favouring shechita, and the country’s leading veterinary experts had emphasised the need for expert statements not only from their own field, but a comprehensive study addressing ‘scientific and practical, as well as religious-ritual terms’.⁸⁸⁵ On the other side, animal protectionists and peasant-movement activists did not trust veterinary experts (or experts from any other field for that matter), and regarded ‘practitioners’ and lay opinions as the only proper judges in this question.

This tension between the supporters of expert judgements and those of lay opinions was also reflected in the parliamentary debate. In the quotation of Jon Sundby above, the Peasant Party MP equated these two types of judgements by establishing the fact that ‘statements and people’s opinions’ had been consulted long ago, and thus there was no need for further deliberations. Indirectly, however, he rated ‘people’s opinions’ higher than ‘statements’, since most expert statements so far had been positive to allowing shechita. Similarly, Svend Skaardal attempted to rely on expert authority when stating that ‘the issue has been presented to a number of authorities’. However, when looking closer at Skaardal’s argument, it becomes clear that by the word ‘authorities’ he did not have experts of veterinary medicine and other scientists in mind. Skaardal instead pointed to the animal protection movement, ‘which the Odelsting is bound to take into account’, as well as to ‘Norwegian veterinarians, who represent the expertise’.⁸⁸⁶

By ‘Norwegian veterinarians’, Skaardal of course referred to the 60 district veterinarians who had signed the Norwegian Association of Veterinarian’s protest against shechita. Thus, he avoided the debate of ‘expert statements’ and ‘lay opinions’ simply by identifying the real authority as practicing, *Norwegian* veterinarians. Implicitly in this is also a rejection of the mostly foreign statements in the dossier enclosed with the Agricultural Committee minority’s proposal. Reacting to Skaardal’s attempt to ignore tensions between expert statements and lay opinions, Fjærli pointed out that the Ministry of Agriculture had not consulted a single scientist when preparing the bill, that only some 50 veterinarians of a total of 250 had

⁸⁸⁵ ‘Schächtningen. Der forlanges en sakkyndig utredning’ in *Aftenposten*, 02.07.1926.

⁸⁸⁶ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1098.

responded to the animal protection movement's inquiries, and finally, that the latter movement could not be regarded an authority in this question.⁸⁸⁷

Religious Freedom and Religious Sensibilities

The main arguments invoked by *defenders* of shechita were religious freedom and minority rights. Jakob Gimre, the other half of the Agricultural Committee's dissenting minority and a conservative MP from Rogaland, emphasised religious freedom as the decisive reason for his own stance. Gimre argued similarly to how Olav Skar and others arguing from a Christian perspective had done the previous year: 'I am reluctant to participate in offending their religious conviction, even though I myself find that it has little or no relevance to me'.⁸⁸⁸ The clergyman and Labour MP Kristian Tønder (1860–1934) of Troms County in Northern Norway elaborated the aspect of religious freedom by rhetorically asking 'How would true believing Christians among us feel if obstacles were put in the way of their worship in the same way as one does in this case against Jews?'.⁸⁸⁹ Even former prime minister and atheist Johan Ludwig Mowinckel used this argument when he emphasised that the issue in fact was 'a religious question of a wide-reaching and profound significance, and we are doing a religious injustice against a race of our fellow citizens'.⁸⁹⁰

The argument of religious freedom was dismissed by Jon Sundby, who by claiming that this freedom was being abused by Jews and their supporters, echoed previous accusations against Jews in the kosher slaughtering affair. Sundby further drew parallels to other religious practices that were not allowed due to their offending character:

Religious freedom should be respected, but not when religious practice causes general offense. The Englishmen do not respect religious freedom in India in a way that makes the sacrifice of widows and children legal, and Americans do not practice religious freedom in America such that Mormons have the right to polygamy.⁸⁹¹

The defenders of shechita, on the other hand, could not see that kosher slaughtering in any way offended the 'majority'. For instance, Liberal Party MP, teacher, and historian Rasmus

⁸⁸⁷ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1099.

⁸⁸⁸ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1100.

⁸⁸⁹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1110.

⁸⁹⁰ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1102. Mowinckel had at an early point in his life left the Church of Norway, which later would cause problems due to the requirement of state church membership for entering the cabinet (Kjølås 1999, p. 146).

⁸⁹¹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1105.

Tveteraas (1862–1938) of Rogaland argued that the Jews' sensibilities should take precedence in this question:

There is nowhere in the Pentateuch where a specific slaughter method is prescribed. It is therefore only the Talmud they base on. But this is a holy book for Jews, and therefore I understand very well that they cannot depart from this after so many thousand years of tradition. And when this religious feeling is so strong, one should as far as possible take it into account.⁸⁹²

This quote from Tveteraas should, like his fellow Rogaland representative Jakob Gimre's speech, be understood from a Christian perspective. In Tveteraas' case, his Christian conviction is beyond doubt, since he served as board member in a number of influential Christian organisations, such as the Norwegian Missionary Society and the Norwegian Sunday School Federation.⁸⁹³ He had also edited a missionary magazine around the turn of the century.⁸⁹⁴

The essence of both Tveteraas' and Gimre's arguments was that authorities should be cautious to intervene in religious practices, and that Jewish religious practice had a special status due to the historical fate of the Jewish people. This coming from two Rogaland MPs is not surprising, given the large adherence to pietistic low-church movements and the long traditions of dissenting Christians in this part of the country. In fact, some of the early demands to abolish state monopoly on religious worship arose among Quakers in Rogaland in the 1820s,⁸⁹⁵ and a hundred years later, this region still had the greatest diversity of Christian denominations dissenting from the State Church. However, these two Rogaland MPs' take on kosher slaughtering differed radically from the Jewish Mission's, which valued Jews' adherence to the Talmud very little, at best. Still, in the Odelsting, the argument of the Jews' religious sensibilities must have had considerable resonance, since this argument was increasingly being opposed with notions of *Norwegian* religious feelings.

Haakon Five had already in May 1926 adopted the animal protection movement's claim of kindness towards animals being 'feelings in our people of a deep religious character'.⁸⁹⁶ Five also repeated this notion during the Odelsting debate in order to counter arguments of religious freedom favouring Jews:

⁸⁹² *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1110.

⁸⁹³ Haffner 1949, p. 735.

⁸⁹⁴ Tveteraas et al. 1914, p. 286.

⁸⁹⁵ Niemi et al. 2003, p. 82f.

⁸⁹⁶ Haakon Five: 'Den jødiske 'schächting'. En uttalelse av stortingsmann Five' in *Dagbladet*, 22.05.1926.

We also have our religion, and it is for many of us a question of deep religious character to ensure humane treatment of our animals. We are offended in our religious notions when animals are mistreated, and when these two religious notions seemingly collide, [...] it is the Norwegian people's religious position that must prevail.⁸⁹⁷

Five was supported by Østfold County Conservative MP Johan Ileby (1878–1948), who stated that ‘also we have our religious notions, which we have the right to promote as much as possible. In this case, Norwegians should not submit to the religion of others’.⁸⁹⁸ Apart from Jews so unambiguously being defined as ‘others’, the most interesting thing about this line of reasoning is the concept ‘religious notions’ [religiøse oppfatninger]. This term was only vaguely defined by those using it, but the use of the noun ‘notions’ suggest that this was something quite different from religious *beliefs* or *faith*. Such terms were probably deliberately avoided in order also to appeal to non-believers among the MPs. By using the blurred concept of ‘religious notions’ to argue for ‘our’ religious freedom, Five and like-minded MPs were able to counter arguments of religious freedom for Jews.

By defining animal protection as a religious feeling, opponents of shechita also highlighted that kosher slaughtering was something deeply alien to the Norwegian mentality. Thus, the concept of ‘religious notions’ is in fact close to Hulda Garborg's notions discussed in the previous chapter, claiming that kosher slaughtering offended ‘*Norwegian* sensibilities’. By elevating this concept to ‘*religious* sensibilities’, Five and his allies obtained a stronger discursive force, appealing to believers, as well as non-believers. Still, this term relied on the same notion of Norwegians being kinder towards animals than Jews and other ‘southern races’ were. This notion was even more explicitly present in Jon Sundby's argumentation. In order to contrast the status of animals among southern and northern Europeans, respectively, Sundby rhetorically asked ‘what would happen to a man in this country if he treated his horse like one usually sees in southern countries? Would he himself not have been whipped?’⁸⁹⁹

Against these notions of animal protection being innate in the Norwegian mentality, defenders of shechita objected that Norwegians too had their flaws. More precisely, traditional Norwegian slaughter customs were attacked for being far more violent and brutal than shechita. Jakob Gimre claimed he had observed ‘much slaughtering a lot uglier than kosher

⁸⁹⁷ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1103.

⁸⁹⁸ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1104.

⁸⁹⁹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1111.

slaughtering', while Communist Party MP Sverre Støstad of Trondheim compared the Jewish method with traditional Norwegian slaughter methods:

Kosher slaughtering is being presented as something terribly painful for animals, almost as painful as the old slaughter method we used in this country not that many years ago, yes, not so long ago that I myself remember it very well. I think we all must confess that kosher slaughtering is far, far more humane than the slaughter method we ourselves used not that long ago.⁹⁰⁰

Similarly, Labour MP and clergyman Kristian Tønder of Troms County characterised those arguing against shechita as hypocrites: 'this strikes me as hypocrisy. All we who live scattered around the country know that the manner of how our domestic animals are being killed is not considered very important'.⁹⁰¹ Støstad also criticised other practices, for instance hunting methods such as trapping.⁹⁰² He asked why 'Mr. Five and the others do not take the consequence of their own stance' and 'why these things are allowed as hunting methods today?' He reckoned he would not obtain any answer from Five and other opponents of shechita, since 'their economic sensitivities are stronger than their religious ones'.⁹⁰³ In this last point, Støstad was probably closer to reality than he himself realised. When a slight majority eventually voted for postponing the bill, economic concerns might also have played a role.

International Reputation and Foreign Interference

During the Odelsting debate, several speakers arguing for a postponement mentioned how a kosher slaughtering prohibition might damage Norway's reputation abroad, and how this in turn might affect trade. Olav Fjærli pointed out that 'the Norwegian nation has a reputation of being a tolerant nation, and we would like this mark not to be removed from us'.⁹⁰⁴ As mentioned above, one of Prime Minister Lykke's main arguments for postponing the bill was that he feared a kosher slaughter prohibition would violate one of the League of Nations' leading principles. Carl Joachim Hambro (1885–1964), Lykke's successor as Conservative Party leader and also chairman of the Storting's Foreign Affairs Committee, supported Lykke's postponement proposal, emphasising: 'what vast complex of interests being affected by this issue, what attention it has stirred up in all countries, and what protests it has invoked

⁹⁰⁰ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1099.

⁹⁰¹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1101.

⁹⁰² 'Hvorfor tar ikke hr. Five og andre konsekvensen av dette standpunkt og sier, at vi vil heller ikke se på at snarefangst og fallstokk og glækse og denslags ting er tillatte jaktmetoder idag?'

⁹⁰³ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1107.

⁹⁰⁴ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1099.

from the most different camps'. Hambro stated that he also wanted to have examined more closely 'aspects concerning purely business political issues'.⁹⁰⁵ Lykke's predecessor as both prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, Johan Ludwig Mowinckel, concurred with Lykke and Hambro: 'It has become evident in foreign affairs, especially in trade politics and economic politics, that one thing interferes with the other'.⁹⁰⁶ Mowinckel was known to be one of the League of Nations' strongest proponents in Norwegian politics, and served from 1925 as Norway's envoy to its general assembly in Geneva. Besides being a strong proponent of the League of Nations, he also represented 'the liberal tradition in intellectual and cultural issues' within the Liberal Party, as well as a 'steadfast economic liberalism', as one of his biographers wrote.⁹⁰⁷ Another biographer characterised Mowinckel as 'A classical 1890s radical: freethinker, liberal, actively national and warmly engaged by societal interests'.⁹⁰⁸ Hence, it was hardly coincidental that Mowinckel defended Jews' minority rights, or wished to avoid anything that might damage relations abroad.

Still, statements by Lykke, Mowinckel, and Hambro emphasizing negative reactions abroad made other MPs suggest that external forces were seeking to influence the Odelsting's decision. Jon Sundby stated he could not understand what kind of reactions the bill had provoked abroad, and pointed out that 'the Agricultural Committee has received all documents, and they show nothing else than Jews, orthodox Jews that is, [...] standing together in protest', which Sundby after all understood very well.⁹⁰⁹ Other MPs were more suspicious about the protests than was Sundby. Møre and Romsdal MP Rasmus Langeland of the Peasant Party asked 'are we not even allowed to make a slaughter law in this country, for our own domestic animals, without being dictated to from abroad?'.⁹¹⁰ Once more, former minister of agriculture Haakon Five went furthest in his accusations, with regard to both content and pathos. Five opened his speech by suggesting that he knew who was standing behind the objections from abroad, without mentioning anyone specific: 'I know very well that powerful forces are in motion in this question'. Five continued:

⁹⁰⁵ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1100.

⁹⁰⁶ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1103.

⁹⁰⁷ Mjeldheim 2003, p. 379.

⁹⁰⁸ Brøgger 1940, p. 379.

⁹⁰⁹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1101.

⁹¹⁰ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1102.

At least the Norwegian people has the right to know what means some are seeking to use in this issue to prevent the Norwegian people from legislating what suites the Norwegian people. [...] Should it turn out that a slaughter method, Jewish or any other for that matter, might conflict with the Norwegian notion of justice, the Norwegian notion of justice must prevail if we are a sovereign people.⁹¹¹

Despite purposely being ambiguous, Five undoubtedly referred to ‘threats’ from Jews abroad. Five questioned the legitimacy of such threats, which in Lykke’s, Mowickel’s, and Hambro’s speeches had been nothing else than possible consequences for Norway’s reputation abroad, which in turn could negatively affect trade and other foreign interests. Despite Five’s insinuating accusations, most MPs still chose to support Lykke’s postponement proposal. After an afternoon of negotiations, 55 MPs voted in favour of Lykke’s proposal and 48 against, including all Peasant Party MPs present. However, Five’s accusations did not go unnoticed by the press – on the contrary, these accusations were to dominate the press coverage the following weeks, especially in peasant-movement press and in some major Labour Party newspapers.

Reactions in the Press: ‘International Finance’ and ‘Money Jews’

Not surprisingly, the Odelsting’s decision to postpone the slaughter bill another year created great indignation in the peasant-movement press. The Peasant Party was the only party whose Odelsting members had voted unanimously against Prime Minister Lykke’s proposal. As shown in the previous chapter, it was *Nationen* and several peasant movement local organs such as *Østlandets Blad* that had engaged most eagerly in the anti-shechita agitation the year before, although far from alone, and with significant help from both centre-right press and certain labour-movement newspapers. The comparatively modest press coverage in 1927, up until the Odelsting addressed the bill in late June, did not differ remarkably from the coverage of the previous year’s debates;⁹¹² however, the 1927 Odelsting debate led to a discursive reorientation in the press coverage. During the Odelsting debate, opponents of shechita had protested against Mowinckel’s, Lykke’s, and Hambro’s warnings against a shechita prohibition’s potential consequences for the country’s reputation abroad and for its trade and business. These protesters declared themselves unwilling to be ‘dictated to from abroad’, and without hesitation, the Peasant Party press accepted this premise and unambiguously identified ‘international money Jews’ as the force behind the postponement.

⁹¹¹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 1103.

⁹¹² Some of this has already been treated in the previous chapter.

The historian Kjetil Simonsen, who has studied anti-Semitism within the peasant movement in the interwar years, characterises reactions in peasant-movement newspapers after the Odelsting's postponement decision as a 'concretisation of the anti-Semitic and nationalistic rhetoric that had occurred in the peasant-movement press since the founding of the Peasant Party'.⁹¹³ He also claims that agitation against kosher slaughtering became an integrated part of the Peasant Party's election campaign leading up to parliamentary elections in October 1927. During the campaign, the Peasant Party claimed that its persistent opposition against kosher slaughtering was proof of the party's 'true national line in Norwegian politics', in contrast to centre-right parties and the Labour Party, who were undermining Norwegian sovereignty through their compliance under pressure from foreign 'money Jews'.⁹¹⁴

This perspective is certainly useful to understand the shift taking place in the debate after the 1927 postponement, but Simonsen does not take into account that the peasant movement was not alone in sharpening the rhetoric against interference by 'international Jewry' in 1927. Firstly, accusations of foreign interventions had been a central component in agitation against kosher slaughtering long before 1927 – already in the Kristiania controversy over ten years earlier, the animal protection movement had made similar accusations, which later were adopted by the peasant-movement press. Secondly, also the labour press increasingly made such accusations after the slaughter bill had been blocked. Simultaneously, the conservative press lowered its rhetoric against kosher slaughtering, and for a short interlude during the election campaign, opposition to kosher slaughtering became a common cause for the peasant movement and labour movement against the leading centre-right politicians. Of course, neither the Labour Party's nor the Peasant Party's criticism of the centre-right parties was something new, and 1920s finance politics debates constitute an important backdrop for understanding the anti-Semitic rhetoric used in the 1927 election campaign.

The Liberal and Conservative cabinets throughout the 1920s were particularly criticised by the Labour Party and the Peasant Party for imposing austerity politics to pay off national debt.⁹¹⁵ During the Great War, the state had taken up large loans abroad, mainly in order to

⁹¹³ Simonsen 2012, p. 23.

⁹¹⁴ Simonsen 2012, p. 22.

⁹¹⁵ According to the historian Rolf Danielsen, at the beginning of the 1920s, the national debt had been quadrupled since the outbreak of the war to almost two billion kroner, of which a billion had accrued since the end of the war (Danielsen 1984, p. 115).

pay costs for wartime provisions and to safeguard neutrality.⁹¹⁶ In 1923, the Conservative–Liberal Left Party coalition cabinet had initiated measures to pay off these loans, which among other things involved taking up new loans and raising customs taxes and consumption taxes. Also the prohibition of fortified wine was lifted in order for the state to obtain income from the hitherto illegal sale of fortified wine and liquor.⁹¹⁷ These highly unpopular measures of indirect taxation meant higher living costs for ordinary citizens, and the Labour Party claimed that costs of emerging labour conflicts would surpass the gains of the new taxes.⁹¹⁸ Simultaneously, the semi-independent Bank of Norway’s deflation politics made it difficult for many ordinary borrowers to pay off loans taken up before or during the war, which especially affected farmers and smallholders. Deflation politics also resulted in lower economic growth and higher unemployment.⁹¹⁹ All these circumstances contributed to make the governing centre-right parties highly unpopular in the Labour and Peasant Party opposition, and particularly Ivar Lykke’s Conservative cabinet in 1926–1928 received harsh criticism, even from far-right press (especially *Tidens Tegn*). Still, conservative and liberal newspapers mostly remained loyal to Lykke. The strong discontent with Lykke’s cabinet was also reflected in the 1927 kosher slaughtering debates, where the peasant-movement press and parts of the labour press took the opportunity to sharpen the criticism of Lykke by implying that the governing centre-right parties, due to the debts, were under the control of foreign ‘finance Jews’.

While liberal *Dagbladet* already the day after the Odelsting plenary meeting of June 30 concluded in a headline ‘The law on kosher slaughtering postponed. Jews abroad exercise their influence’,⁹²⁰ conservative *Aftenposten* offered only uncommented excerpts of the debate.⁹²¹ Regardless of a disclaimer from Prime Minister Lykke printed in *Dagbladet* a few days later, stating there had been ‘no economic pressure’ from abroad, Norway’s two leading labour newspapers, as well as most peasant-movement papers, claimed in following weeks that the Odelsting’s postponement was a sign of weakness towards international Jewry. Apart from *Tidens Tegn* and certain other far-right papers, the absence of the conservative press is striking, and the kosher slaughter issue disappeared almost completely from centre-right

⁹¹⁶ Danielsen 1984, p. 116.

⁹¹⁷ Danielsen 1984, pp. 124–125.

⁹¹⁸ Danielsen 1984, p. 122.

⁹¹⁹ Lie 2012, p. 56.

⁹²⁰ ‘Loven om schächtning utsatt. Jødene i utlandet gjør sin innflydelse gjeldende’ in *Dagbladet*, 01.07.1927.

⁹²¹ ‘Intet forbud mot schächtning’ in *Aftenposten*, 01.07.1927.

newspapers until the final vote over the issue in June 1929. Another striking change after the 1927 Odelsting debate is the absence in the press of letters or comments *supportive* of exempting kosher slaughtering in the new law. In a sense, one may say that the *debate* over kosher slaughtering was over, and from now on, only agitation *against* kosher slaughtering appeared in print – more than often filled with anti-Semitic stereotypes or conspiracy beliefs.

Norwegian Animals and Norwegian Independence in the Peasant Press

In the two weeks following the Odelsting meeting of June 30, *Nationen* almost daily carried pieces on the issue, either editorials or pieces by submitters, accusing ‘money Jews’, etc. of undue interference in internal Norwegian affairs.⁹²² The latest turn in the Odelsting debate apparently made attacks on Jews more legitimate in print, and the tone was significantly sharpened. Previously, attacks had mainly been centred on Jewish religion and Jewish customs, more or less implicitly suggesting that Jews were on a lower level of civilisation than Northern Europeans were. In this sense, Jews were regarded as cruel towards animals, but apart from that, harmless. Some submitters had even regretted that a people as noble as the Jews still remained in the ‘Middle Ages’ with respect to treatment of animals and lack of compassion.⁹²³ For submitters and editors in *Nationen* and other peasant-movement newspapers,⁹²⁴ the alleged interference of foreign ‘money Jews’ was regarded an attack on Norwegian farm animals and farmers, and their hateful responses were intended as a form of self-defence.

Nationen published on its front page on July 4 a longer piece by one of the newspaper’s regular columnists, the author Ingeborg Møller (1878–1964). Møller was also known as a keen anthroposophist, and had become personally acquainted with Rudolf Steiner in 1909. She hailed from a family of civil officers and large landowners – the historian P. A. Munch was her maternal grandfather, and she was born at Thorsø manor house in Østfold County as the daughter of an infantry officer with strong cultural interests.⁹²⁵ In her *Nationen* article, she dismissed opinions of ‘certain obstinate “experts”’, who defended the Jewish slaughter

⁹²² Ingeborg Møller: ‘Kongsmerke eller trælemerke’ 04.07.1927; ‘Lavard’: ‘Hvem regjerer i Norge’ 04.07.1927; editorial 05.07.1927; ‘Den ældre’: ‘Schächt ikke Dagros!’ 06.07.1927; editorial 18.07.1927; ‘H. W. K.’: ‘Schächtningen’ 20.07.1927, K. Wassem: ‘Oldtidens blot og nutidens schächtning’.

⁹²³ See for instance *Nationen*, 11.04.1927.

⁹²⁴ *Østlændingen* (16.06.1927) had already, after the Agricultural Committee had submitted its recommendations, written that the minority of the committee had wanted a postponement due to their ‘fear of the Jews’ vengeance’.

⁹²⁵ Groth 1940, p. 566.

method ‘with numbers and curves and pulsation counting’. Møller insisted that ‘kosher slaughtering would always appear as disgusting’ to ‘Norwegian national instinct’. This instinct derived from a special ‘relationship of the heart’ between animals and humans in Norway, having existed ‘from the most distant past’. For the Norwegian people, domestic animals were a ‘vital necessity, which had followed us through good and bad days’, and Møller blamed the country’s leaders for not giving animals enough consideration.

In Møller’s and other pieces in the peasant-movement press immediately after the Odelsting debate, a semantic proximity was constructed between animals and simple, but kindhearted Norwegian farmers. This proximity was contrasted to the distance to the foreign Jews who allegedly had caused the slaughter bill’s postponement. Domestic animals had loyally stayed together with Norwegian farmers throughout centuries in ‘good and bad days’, and animals were referred to as ‘our friends the animals’ in contrast to ‘a handful of Jews’. According to Møller, animals still today ‘supply the Norwegian people with food and clothes, from mountain to the seashore’, in contrast to Jews, who recently ‘by extortion and murder have usurped power in the East’ (i. e. Russia). Thus, animals were valued higher than Jews were, and animals’ interests should therefore take precedence over those of Jews. In Møller’s piece, Jews were exclusively associated with money, usurpation, violence, and even with murdering Christ: ‘Therefore they [i. e. the politicians] now wash their hands. There was once upon a time a man called Pilate who also washed his hands “out of fear of the Jews”’.⁹²⁶

An anonymous letter in *Nationen* two days later conveyed similar notions of closeness to domestic animals and distance from foreign Jews, respectively. The submitter supported the idea of protecting minorities: ‘Yes, let us protect the minorities. But if there is one minority deserving human protection, it is the animals. [...] They are our friends. [...] They have served us in life, and they serve us by their death’. The submitter also added another reason for why domestic animals deserved more sympathy than Jews did. Because animals were not able to express their own interests and needs, humans were obliged to do this for them and to act as ‘the voice of the minorities and the mutes’. The submitter also confessed that he once in his youth had found much love among the cattle in his father’s barn, and had evolved a close friendship with a cow: ‘She seemingly appreciated me, and I honestly confess that I loved her’. The submitter further stated that he would have defended his friend with his life if

⁹²⁶ Ingeborg Møller: ‘Kongsmerke eller trælemerke’ in *Nationen*, 04.07.1927.

anyone had attempted to slaughter her according to the Jewish method.⁹²⁷ Thus, by evoking images of childhood and friendship, images many readers could relate to from their own childhood, animals appeared closer to the readers, while kosher slaughtering Jews appeared even more crude and insensitive. Also in *Østlandets Blad*, writings on kosher slaughtering were characterised by images of farmers' love for their animals. For instance, a journalist urged local farmers to 'ensure that livestock do not end up in the hands of Jews', and regretfully asked 'How many a farmer's wife, a dairy maid, a milker, yes, even a farmer, would not have wept bitter tears, and felt a painful sting in the heart, had they known in what manner this or that animal from their barn had suffered'.⁹²⁸

In his reading of Ingeborg Møller's reaction to the postponement, Kjetil Simonsen points out that Møller's piece 'contributed to activate the notion [...] that politicians had undermined the national sovereignty by opening the country for "Jewish monetary powers"'.⁹²⁹ However, Møller's anti-Semitic piece should not only be understood as a part of *Nationen*'s increasing demonisation of Jews throughout the 1920s. Møller may also have had her own motives in attacking Jews for kosher slaughtering. As mentioned above, Møller was one of Norway's leading anthroposophists in the interwar years, and like Hulda Garborg, Møller was a close friend and fellow partisan of Marta Steinsvik.⁹³⁰ Therefore, her attacks on Jews in *Nationen* should also be viewed in light of her connections to Steinsvik, the Garborgs, and the Asker circle. However, perhaps even more, her attacks on Jews should be viewed as being a result of anthroposophist and mysticist inclinations among these authors'.

After historian of ideas Jan-Erik Ebbestad Hansen in 2009 had characterised the author and anthroposophist Alf Larsen (1885–1967) as 'the greatest anti-Semite in Norwegian literature', a debate erupted in Norwegian newspapers about the relationship between anti-Semitism and the small, but culturally relatively influential, anthroposophist milieu in Norway. Alf Larsen, who also was one of Ingeborg Møller's greatest admirers,⁹³¹ identified Jews as the principal conveyors of modernity, and Larsen's view on Jews derived from his anthroposophist

⁹²⁷ 'Den ældre': 'Schächt ikke Dagros!' in *Nationen*, 06.07.1927. The letter had also been in print in *Oslo Aftenavis* the day before.

⁹²⁸ *Østlandets Blad*, 07.07.1927. See also a piece in the same paper on 12.09.1927 for similar notions.

⁹²⁹ Simonsen 2012, p. 20. Simonsen also includes excerpts from other peasant-movement newspapers in the East Country confirming the picture given in *Nationen* (Simonsen 2012, pp. 21–22).

⁹³⁰ Christensen 1988.

⁹³¹ Houm 1955, p. 214.

understanding of Christianity, according to Hansen.⁹³² Modernity criticism was a theme occupying many other anthroposophist writers in Norway before and after the Second World War, and Hansen claims that leading anthropologists expressed similar views towards Jews as Larsen did. Although much remains in mapping the role of anti-Semitism among these authors, opposition to kosher slaughtering certainly stands out as a topic engaging many public figures associated with theosophist and anthroposophist circles in the interwar period.

The anthroposophist presence in the kosher slaughter controversy is further highlighted by another renowned anthroposophist having similar opinions to Møller's on print in the Peasant Party local *Laagen*, published in Lillehammer in Oppland County. It was also in the core area of *Laagen* that a petition containing over a thousand signatures protesting against kosher slaughtering had been submitted to the Storting the previous year. The submitter in *Laagen*, Ivar Ivarson Fosse (1859–1939) was a farmer and teacher from the municipality of Sør-Fron in Gudbrandsdalen, where he also had served as mayor for a number of years. Incidentally, the municipal council of Sør-Fron had unanimously urged the Storting in 1926 for a law that would make 'kosher slaughtering forbidden in Norway!'⁹³³ Its former mayor and independent municipal council member Ivar Fosse was a highly educated man. He had lived in Germany for long periods, where he among other things had become acquainted with Steiner and anthroposophy. According to Fosse, Mowinckel and Lykke's concerns about the country's international reputation were an international question only in the sense that 'Jews are an international people [...] owning every large bank in the world – and through these [banks] also [Norwegian] mortgage banks and small-scale farming banks'. Fosse assured that he 'had never been – and still is no anti-Semite', but was pleased that the Peasant Party had voted for the law.⁹³⁴ Already in an editorial in the same paper a few days before Fosse's piece, the editor had claimed that the Bank of Norway was dependent on 'Jewish capital', and asked rhetorically how Norwegians could 'assert ourselves [hevde oss] in other, more important issues when we have to comply in a relatively small matter like this?'

⁹³² Hansen 2009.

⁹³³ Archives of the Storting: Stortingets Ekstraktprotokoll, 1926, No.559.

⁹³⁴ Ivar Iv. Fosse: 'Schächtning – Slaktelov – Viviseksjon' in *Laagen*, 07.07.1927. *Laagen* was one of the two newspapers in the region's principal town Lillehammer. The Peasant Party politician and son of the author Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Erling Bjørnson (1868–1959), was the newspaper's chairman. Bjørnson would later join Quisling's National Unity Party during the Second World War.

Perhaps most striking with *Laagen*'s coverage of this phase of the controversy was that the Jewish slaughter method itself had become subordinate. Also in the region east of *Laagen*'s distribution range, in Hedmark County, the influential peasant-movement paper *Østlæendingen* reacted in similar patterns.⁹³⁵ In an editorial titled 'Norwegian "independence"', the editor claimed that the Odelsting had postponed the bill because a prohibition of kosher slaughter 'would have made the Jews angry', and they would take revenge by using 'economic reprisals'.⁹³⁶ Not only was powerful 'Jewish finance' accused of having forced politicians to vote for a postponement – an editorial in the Peasant Party organ *Vestopland*,⁹³⁷ published in Gjøvik in Oppland County, turned the argument around. The editor claimed that the 'intervention' from abroad proved how powerful the 'Jewish high finance' was, and demonstrated the range of its power.⁹³⁸ In addition, the other main organ of the peasant movement in the East Country subscribed to this logic. *Østlandets Blad* regarded the postponement 'another evidence of the fact that money rules the world, and that big finance is around',⁹³⁹ while *Østlæendingen* claimed that 'This episode in the Odelsting is a clear testimony of danger being ahead [fare på ferde]. So great is the influence of Jews that it terrifies the parliament's majority'.⁹⁴⁰

Also the Trøndelag peasant press now included attacks on centre-right politicians and socialists in the agitation against kosher slaughtering. The local paper *Namdalen*, covering the region in Nord-Trøndelag County by the same name, concluded that the postponement was yet another instance where parties left and right of the Peasant Party submitted to international 'Jewish money power', and that the nation currently was subdued in 'chains of slavery'.⁹⁴¹ The main organ of the Norwegian Farmer's Union in Trøndelag, *Nasjonalbladet*, published in Trondheim, claimed like some of the East Country peasant-movement papers that the suspicion of 'hidden forces behind the scenes [...] grows to certainty'.⁹⁴²

⁹³⁵ *Østlæendingen* was the second-largest organ of the peasant movement after *Nationen* (Nielsen 1997, p. 219).

⁹³⁶ 'Norsk "selvstendighet"' in *Østlæendingen*, 05.07.1927. See also 'Herre i vårt eget hus' 15.07.1927.

⁹³⁷ The editor, Torstein Lange (1886–1959), represented the far-right current of the Peasant Party and later joined Quisling's National Unity Party. Lange wrote enthusiastically about Fascism and National Socialism in the 1930s, and *Vestopland* was the only newspaper in Gjøvik allowed to continue during the Nazi occupation (Flo 2010, p. 289). Incidentally, the schoolteacher, children's books author, and animal protectionist Lars Kjølstad regularly wrote in *Vestopland* in the early 1920's (*Dyrenes Beskytter* 1922, p. 28).

⁹³⁸ 'Jødene' in *Vestopland*, 04.07.1927.

⁹³⁹ 'Schächtningen' in *Østlandets Blad*, 07.07.1927.

⁹⁴⁰ 'Norsk "selvstendighet"' in *Østlæendingen*, 05.07.1927.

⁹⁴¹ *Namdalen* 19.08.1927, quoted in Simonsen 2012, p. 22.

⁹⁴² 'Nemo': 'Schächtningsspørsmålet' in *Nasjonalbladet*, 12.07.1927.

Apart from *Nasjonalbladet*, none of the Trondheim papers seems to have given the issue much consideration this time. However, in *Stjørdalingen*, the Peasant Party organ of one of the larger rural districts in the immediate vicinity of Trondheim,⁹⁴³ Jon Leirfall (1899–1998), a young member of the paper’s editorial staff and later a central Peasant Party/Centre Party politician,⁹⁴⁴ regretted that ‘the Norwegian people no longer shall be allowed to decide what shall be law and justice within the country’s borders’. Leirfall, who became party secretary in 1929 and secretary general of the Peasant Party in 1931,⁹⁴⁵ pointed out that also ‘considerations of party tactics’ could have persuaded the majority to postpone the case. Leirfall claimed that since the parties’ leaderships knew which MPs would vote against a prohibition of kosher slaughtering, thus ‘making themselves impossible as candidates in rural communities’ in forthcoming elections, many MPs had voted for a postponement in order to avoid damage to their own party.⁹⁴⁶ As will be recalled, the Peasant Party was the only party whose entire parliamentary group voted against Lykke’s postponement proposal, and by pointing out the issue’s possible consequences for election results, Leirfall touched upon a crucial aspect. These concerns would also influence the issue’s coverage in the labour press.

‘Jewish Capitalists’ in the Labour Press

Already contemporary observers commented upon anti-shechita agitation in the labour movement along with the peasant movement. Harry Koritzinsky wrote in the entry on Norway in the German *Jüdisches Lexikon* from 1930 that ‘In den letzten Jahren wurde von Bauern- und teilweise auch Arbeiterseite im Reichstag das Schächten angegriffen’,⁹⁴⁷ while Lucien Wolf wrote in a report published in London in 1929 by the Joint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association that ‘the Peasant Union, with the support of a fraction of the Labour Party, seized upon the *Shechita* question as a means of securing popularity with the small farmers’.⁹⁴⁸ However, post-war historiography has mostly neglected this apparently well-known claim among contemporaries. Even though both Mendelsohn (1969) and Johansen (1984) mention the Labour Party’s being divided over

⁹⁴³ Like most of the other peasant-movement papers quoted here, *Stjørdalingen* also became associated with the National Unity Party during the Second World War, and was the only paper in the Stjørdalen district allowed to continue during the war.

⁹⁴⁴ For Leirfall’s time in *Stjørdalingen* in the 1920s, see Leirfall 1989, p. 18.

⁹⁴⁵ Nielsen 2001, p. 156.

⁹⁴⁶ J[on] L[eirfall]: ‘De 55’ in *Stjørdalingen*, 07.07.1927.

⁹⁴⁷ Koritzinsky 1930, p. 524.

⁹⁴⁸ Wolf 1929, p. 8. Given the contact between the Mosaic Congregation in Oslo and the Board of Deputies in the preceding years, Wolf’s information might just as well have derived from Koritzinsky, who still in 1929 was the Congregation’s secretary.

the issue in the 1929 parliamentary vote, neither of them looks any deeper into how the issue was received in the labour movement.⁹⁴⁹ Thus, it would be highly relevant to examine how major labour-movement newspapers framed the kosher slaughtering issue prior to 1929. Such an examination will also shed light upon the stance taken by a majority of Labour MPs in the final Odelsting debate in 1929.

In contrast to the peasant movement, where most of the national and local press eagerly engaged in the controversy (at least in Trøndelag and the East Country), it was mainly the major labour-movement organs that took interest in the issue, and to a lesser extent local labour press. *Arbeiderbladet*, the Labour Party's official national organ and the country's largest labour newspaper, found the decision to postpone the bill wise, and defended Labour MPs having voted for the postponement by claiming that they voted out of 'purely factual concerns'. Still, the paper was unsettled by the 'external pressure', and the editorial piece commenting on the postponement was titled 'An Independent People!' Although Mowinckel and Hambro had denied the existence of foreign threats, the paper asked rhetorically 'What other foreign policy concerns could there be?'⁹⁵⁰

The answer was given in another major Labour newspaper, *Fremtiden*, published in Drammen and edited by the influential Labour Party MP Torgeir Vraa.⁹⁵¹ *Fremtiden*, which also was the country's second-largest Labour-movement newspaper after *Arbeiderbladet*, claimed in a piece entitled 'Jewish slaughtering – and Jewish money' that many MPs had spoken strongly against a postponement, 'while "the wise" had emphasised protests coming from big Jewish organisations in all countries (Jewish finance)'. The paper claimed it was 'money anxieties' that dictated this new and surprising stance.⁹⁵² That the kosher slaughter issue had taken an unexpected turn was certainly the case, and it must have been especially disappointing for editor Vraa. The interview Labour MP Johannes Bøe gave in *Oppland Arbeiderblad* after the Agricultural Committee's inspection a year earlier suggests that Vraa had been one of the journalists most eager to get into the slaughterhouse. As will be recalled, the press was denied

⁹⁴⁹ Johansen 1984, p. 66.

⁹⁵⁰ 'Et fritt folk!' in *Arbeiderbladet*, 01.07.1927.

⁹⁵¹ Torgeir Vraa (1868–1934) was born in Telemark as son of a smallholder, but had been given the opportunity of becoming a teacher. During his first teaching assignment in Modum in Buskerud, Vraa had become acquainted with Christopher Hornsrud and the radical circles of the Buskerud Liberal Party. Vraa later joined his political mentor Hornsrud in the Labour Party in 1897, and Vraa soon became a successful Labour-press journalist both in Buskerud and in the capital. Vraa also represented his home town of Drammen in the Storting in several periods from 1906 until 1933 (Berntsen 2005, p. 405. See also Colbensen 2001).

⁹⁵² 'Jødisk slaktning – og jødiske penger. Schächtingen skal fortsette allikevel' in *Fremtiden*, 01.07.1927.

admission into the slaughterhouse due to limited space. Bøe had stated in the interview, ‘It is almost impossible to get rid of the journalist Vrå [*sic*]. He nags repeatedly on getting some kind of article’,⁹⁵³ and it must have been journalists like Vraa that Olav Fjærli had in mind when he spoke to the Odelsting about a ‘press eager for sensation having agitated the mood’ (see above).

In any case, Vraa had perhaps not gotten what he wanted the previous year, but allegations about ‘pressure from abroad’ in the Odelsting debate made Vraa launch a campaign in *Fremtiden*, claiming that leading centre-right politicians were in the pockets of ‘Jewish finance’. In an editorial on July 1, 1927, Vraa viewed the slaughter bill’s postponement as yet another sign of the Conservative cabinet’s weakness, and claimed that the cabinet’s head had wanted a postponement

because Jewish capitalists have threatened to terminate state loans. And the conservatives obeyed the whip from abroad. The poor fatherland once again had to yield – suddenly, the terrible, disgusting, criminal kosher slaughtering did not matter any longer; the proud Norway, the beloved fatherland had to put up with receiving orders from bank Jews abroad; the conservative cabinet was the first to kiss the rod [krype til korset] as a reaction to the attack on our independence.⁹⁵⁴

Vraa also claimed that the cabinet had tried to compensate for its weakness towards foreign ‘bank Jews’ by ordering several police raids against labour unions and communists, and Vraa encouraged the working class to take the opportunity to join forces ‘as protection of their interests and to battle their abusers’.⁹⁵⁵ Few other Labour Party papers expressed such conspiratorial beliefs with the same conviction as Torgeir Vraa did, but letters printed in local East Country labour press confirm the existence of similar notions in the labour movement beyond the two leading Labour Party newspapers quoted above. For instance, a submitter to *Telemark Kommunistblad*, published by the Communist Party in the industrial town Skien in Telemark County, claimed the reason for postponing the slaughter bill to be ‘obvious’:

⁹⁵³ J. Bøe: ‘Jødeslaktingen – schächtningen’ in *Opland Arbeiderblad*, 05.06.1926.

⁹⁵⁴ ‘Den “sterke” regjerings siste heltegjerninger’ in *Fremtiden*, 01.07.1927.

⁹⁵⁵ ‘Den “sterke” regjerings siste heltegjerninger’ in *Fremtiden*, 01.07.1927.

Major capitalists abroad, which to a great extent are composed of Jews, had simply written to the Norwegian cabinet with a 'request' to postpone the law, which must be interpreted as table thumping and a rejection of any kind of prohibition of kosher slaughtering.⁹⁵⁶

Most interesting about this letter is that the submitter did not seem to have any great objections to shechita itself, and even claimed that the issue had been greatly exaggerated:

arguments used against kosher slaughtering sound somewhat hollow, having in mind that the same people now screaming loudest about the animal cruelty of the Jewish slaughter method are themselves using fox traps, bird traps and other cruel devices.⁹⁵⁷

The latter point, which resembles Sverre Støstad's arguments in the Odelsting debate, was most likely directed to Peasant Party MPs, whose notions the submitter could not share. What the submitter did have sympathy for, however, was apparently the idea of prohibiting kosher slaughtering in order to demonstrate for the world that the country was unwilling to submit to Jewish capitalists. Thus, the for-or-against kosher slaughtering was changing from being an issue exceeding traditional party divisions to becoming an issue associated with the two hegemonic centre-right parties (the Conservative and Liberal parties), and therefore opposed by the peasant movement and parts of the labour movement.

As Odelsting voting patterns treated later in this chapter will show, the labour movement's consensus on the issue never reached the same level as the peasant movement's. Moreover, some labour-movement papers condemned attempts to prohibit kosher slaughtering. For instance, in the communist paper *Arbeideren*, published in Hamar, in the inner East Country, editor Olav Scheflo (1883–1943) delivered a strong defence for allowing Jews to maintain shechita. In an editorial in July 1927, Scheflo stated that 'the bourgeoisie press, especially the Peasant Party press, makes a big fuss about the postponement of a bill that would prohibit kosher slaughtering'. Scheflo declared that he would defend the Jewish community's right to maintain kosher slaughtering out of principles of religious freedom, regardless if the method was more painful than modern stunning methods. Although he himself did not believe that the Jewish slaughter method was any more painful, he illustrated his point with an analogy to Christian dogmas such as transubstantiation. Scheflo insisted that 'any sensible discussion is impossible for outsiders, only two positions remain possible: either one leaves such notions in

⁹⁵⁶ 'Br.': 'Schächtning – revesaks' in *Telemark Kommunistblad*, 12.07.1927. See also letter in *Eidsvoll Arbeiderblad* 05.07.1927, where it was claimed that the postponement was proof of the 'Jewish big capital reigning in Norway today'.

⁹⁵⁷ 'Br.': 'Schächtning – revesaks' in *Telemark Kommunistblad*, 12.07.1927.

peace, or one initiates religious persecution'. Based on this argument, Scheflo wrote that he was not convinced that 'kosher slaughtering involves enough pain to justify religious persecution', and suggested that one should start with looking at *human* beings, if the goal was to eliminate all the world's sufferings. Still, even Scheflo believed that the postponement had been caused by the interference of 'affluent foreign Jews'; however, he noted that *for once* 'our bourgeoisie's dependence on foreign capital has led to a sensible result'.⁹⁵⁸

That men like Vraa and Scheflo seemingly believed in Jewish control of the international finance system should not be underestimated. Although representing competing currents within the labour movement, these men were two of the movement's most important figures in the 1920s. Torgeir Vraa hailed from rural western Telemark, and as a young man had become engaged in politics through the Liberal Party. He would later join his friend and mentor Christopher Hornsrud in the Labour Party. He then served this party for many years as public speaker and MP, and was editor of *Fremtiden* for nearly three decades until his death in 1934. Although far from being as charismatic as Vraa, Scheflo had made a similar journalistic career in the labour-movement press, and was editor of *Social-Demokraten* in Kristiania from 1918 to 1921 and Labour MP from 1922. Whereas Vraa had condemned the 'Moscow theses', the twenty-one admission conditions to the Communist International, Scheflo had enthusiastically embraced these conditions, and joined the Communist Party when the Labour Party split in 1923. Scheflo subsequently left the Labour Party press and became editor of the Norwegian Communist Party's main organ *Norges Kommunistblad*. However, due to disagreements, the party leadership fired Scheflo as editor only three years later, and Scheflo instead became editor of the party's local paper in Hamar.

Scheflo eventually left the Communist Party in March 1928 because of the party's negative attitudes toward Christopher Hornsrud's newly formed Labour Party cabinet, and re-joined the Labour Party the next year.⁹⁵⁹ Since Scheflo had been elected as one of only three Communist MPs in the 1927 elections, his resignation created much resentment in the Communist Party, and the Labour Party did not welcome Scheflo's decision to switch party either. Historian Edvard Bull would later characterise Scheflo as a 'critical outsider',

⁹⁵⁸ 'Schächtning' in *Arbeideren*, 05.07.1927.

⁹⁵⁹ Scheflo was in June 1928 refused Labour Party membership until the end of the current parliamentary session. He was nevertheless admitted into the Labour Party on 19.4.1929.

unpopular, but deeply respected and recognised by many.⁹⁶⁰ Given Schefflo's stance on kosher slaughtering in 1927, it is remarkable that he eventually voted against exempting shechita from the requirement of previous stunning in 1929. However, his outsider status and weak position within the Labour Party after his re-admittance in April 1929 might have made it difficult to gain any support for his views in June 1929.

'Wir wünschen ja nicht verjudet zu werden' – Reactions on the Far Right

Although most of the conservative press met with silence the Odelsting's decision to postpone the slaughter bill, there were some important exceptions. Most notably, these were found in segments of the conservative press critical to the Conservative Party or that supported the Fatherland League. Rolf Thommessen's *Tidens Tegn*, wrote already on July 2, 1927 that 'Jewish financiers must have threatened directly or indirectly', and drew this conclusion from the fact that there had been 'Jewish bankers' among those who had protested to the Storting the previous year.⁹⁶¹ Thomessen had for some time been one of the Conservative Party's strongest critics, and had in 1924 'commenced a systematic campaign against the Norwegian Conservative Party', according to historian Rolf Danielsen. The campaign reached its climax in April 1927, when Thomessen renounced his loyalty to the cabinet and publicly mocked Prime Minister Lykke. Thomessen was tired of what he perceived as weak Conservative politicians, and regarded Prime Minister Lykke the worst of them all. The editor of *Tidens Tegn* instead yearned for a broad and forceful right-wing coalition, and wanted less influence of the Storting and of the political parties.⁹⁶²

The coverage in *Tidens Tegn* in many ways resembled that of the peasant-movement press – on July 9 the author Olaf Benneche (1883–1931) had a long piece in *Tidens Tegn* where he wrote that 'one of the greatest assets Norwegians possess is this peculiar understanding of the animal psyche, of its ability for suffering and joy'. Benneche used his skills as a fiction author, as he imagined a scene where a peasant family was obliged to sell one of its cows for slaughtering:

⁹⁶⁰ Bull 1954.

⁹⁶¹ Editorial in *Tidens Tegn* 02.07.1927.

⁹⁶² Danielsen 1984, p. 184.

when Halvor and Mari over at Braatan must sell old 'Dagros' to the butcher's purchaser, they will sit in the evening with an uneasiness of conscience and a cold horror rippling through their souls. Maybe 'Dagros' is among the unfortunate animals struggling and rattling in the long minutes while the blood pumps slowly and painfully out of its veins and its eyes writhe in frenetic anguish. In the name of religion!

Benneche not only evoked images of the rural population's close ties of to their animals – he also attacked Mowinckel, Lykke, and Hambro for compliance with 'money-lending Jews', and spoke of the humiliation the country had been exposed to: 'My God, are we the negro republic Haiti or the kingdom of Illyria – how do we find ourselves letting private foreigners interfere in our legislation, dictating to our parliament in entirely internal affairs!' He also argued that *Norwegian* religious feelings had precedence over minority rights: 'The truth is that it offends *our*, the Norwegians', religiosity that animal cruelty becomes protected by law. And Norwegians are the natives in this country'.⁹⁶³

Departing from the notion of kindness to animals as a 'religious feeling' of Norwegians, Benneche encouraged the clergy to take action. His call was answered shortly after by Pastor Peder Christensen in a letter in *Tidens Tegn* on July 16. The former missionary and current curate in Trondheim thanked Benneche, and not least *Tidens Tegn* for bringing up the issue. He also attacked other newspapers and other clergymen for cowardice on this issue. Christensen dismissed the concern for what he called 'the tender religious feelings of the Jews' by pointing out that 'the same Jews do business on their Sabbath!' Christensen claimed that he knew what actually had happened in the Odelsting, and promised to hold a lecture on the issue after the elections:

In the autumn when a new Storting has been elected, a public lecture will be revealed [*sic*] in Oslo, that not even the animal protection movement dared to host. Then the cards will be turned. The bill is not buried. 'Wir wünschen ja nicht verjüdet [*sic*] zu werden'.⁹⁶⁴

These confused words were printed in the country's second largest newspaper, and *Tidens Tegn*'s evening edition (*Oslo Aftenblad*) followed up a few weeks later in a piece, suggesting where the cause for the postponement was to be found: 'One may glimpse a shadow, whose eerie cold surely has frozen many Norwegian minds [...] Does one not glimpse the shadow of debt curse?' Not only did this piece somewhat ambiguously point to Jewish financial power as the postponement's cause – the postponement was also used to *prove* that Jews were in

⁹⁶³ Olaf Benneche: 'Det lukter ilde' in *Tidens Tegn*, 09.07.1927.

⁹⁶⁴ Peder Christensen: 'Vi skal ikke gi os!' in *Tidens Tegn*, 16.07.1927.

control of the Norwegian economy through state loans, giving the Jews the opportunity to interfere in any political issue: 'The independence of the debt-burdened is an independence with modifications. Today it concerns this matter. Tomorrow it may concern another'.⁹⁶⁵ An editorial piece in the same paper almost a month earlier had gone far in the direction of accusing *Norwegian* Jews of standing behind 'threats of reprisals'. The paper claimed that Jews abroad hardly could have become aware of the matter had they not been approached by Norwegian Jews. The piece concluded by questioning Norwegian Jews' loyalty: 'if the Jews, whom we have received here in Norway and given full civil rights, attempt to make powerful forces abroad exercise economic pressure, then the issue is rather serious'.⁹⁶⁶

Also *Norges Fremtid*, the Fatherland League's main organ, engaged in the controversy, and a submitter asked in a letter whether

reprehensible acts should be allowed because they are part of a religious rite of a race of people that very recently has arrived in this country, a race we have not wanted here, and whose concerns in the best case are completely irrelevant for us? Any independent country's government would surely answer 'No!'

Again, belief in Jewish control over Norwegian politics through state loans appeared: 'The path to independence and to a just national self-confidence goes through payment of national debt'.⁹⁶⁷ The Fatherland League was, as was Thommessen's Liberal Left Party faction, highly critical of the hegemonic centre-right parties' ability to fight and eventually defeat the labour movement, but the League also attacked the Conservative Party's economic policies. As with Thommessen, the League had little belief in the parliamentary system, and meant that all centre-right forces had to join under a strong leadership in order to combat the threat from communism.⁹⁶⁸ Although the term 'far right' might be somewhat misleading for describing these groups and currents, they certainly worked towards authoritarian rule, and also included elements having strong inclinations towards fascism. In any case, these groups placed themselves to the right of the Conservative Party, and it is not surprising that also some of the

⁹⁶⁵ 'Skyggen' in *Oslo Aftenblad*, 01.08.1927. See also 'Fattig! Men stolt?' (01.07.1927) and 'Kan bønderne alikevel forhindre schächtningen' (07.07.1927).

⁹⁶⁶ 'Hvem tok initiativet?' in *Oslo Aftenavis*, 02.07.1927.

⁹⁶⁷ 'O. A. B.': 'Vår uavhengighet' in *Norges Fremtid*, 09.07.1927.

⁹⁶⁸ Danielsen 1984, p. 193.

fiercest criticism in the kosher slaughtering affair against Lykke originated from what Rolf Danielsen refers to as ‘right wing activists’ [høyreaktivist].⁹⁶⁹

Although somewhat sharper in rhetoric, the postponement’s coverage in the press associated with the Liberal Left Party and the Fatherland League, respectively, did not differ significantly from the coverage in peasant-movement papers, and to a certain extent labour press. Both in the papers just quoted and in peasant- and labour-movement press, the postponement was perceived as a result of an intervention by foreign ‘finance Jews’, similar to what some MPs already had insinuated during the Odelsting debate. Another similarity between the peasant press’ and *Tidens Tegn*’s coverage was the emphasis on the extraordinarily close ties between Norwegian farmers and their animals. Curiously, the editors’ and submitters’ claim that centre-right politicians were under the influence of wealthy foreign Jews was perceived as the *cause* for the postponement, while simultaneously being perceived as *proof* of the country’s submission to Jewish capital.

Despite the incoherence in some of these arguments, the two hegemonic parties having alternated in cabinet since 1884 were accused for cowardice, weakness, and complacency by most shades of political life in Norway, and not, as Mendelsohn writes, that ‘The statements from abroad were in *certain quarters* unfortunately perceived as an attempt to involve Jewish circles abroad in Norwegian affairs’.⁹⁷⁰ In fact, his diffuse ‘certain quarters’ were influential actors and newspapers associated with the parliamentary opposition, as well as dissenting right-wing activists. Common for all newspapers conveying such accusations was that they used the kosher slaughtering issue against the centre-right parties in the election campaign. In the case of the peasant-movement press, this has already been pointed out by Simonsen, who regards the peasant movement’s campaign against kosher slaughtering as the culmination of the movement’s anti-Semitic and nationalistic rhetoric in the interwar years.⁹⁷¹ However, presence of similar notions in labour newspapers suggests that the peasant movement’s use of the kosher slaughtering affair in the election campaign was far from unique. The issue was seemingly regarded as an efficient measure in smear campaigns against the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party. Most of all, it shows how easily negative images of Jews could be applied on a wide range of issues. The use of such images indicates that they were far from

⁹⁶⁹ Danielsen 1984, p. 171ff.

⁹⁷⁰ Mendelsohn 1969, p. 576. My italics.

⁹⁷¹ Simonsen 2012, p. 22.

new, and that these presumably widespread and tenacious images could be activated for a number of purposes – in this case to discredit the hegemonic centre-right parties.

1928: A Third Postponement

To what extent the issue affected the results of elections on October 17 is difficult to say, but the opposition's campaign can hardly have contributed positively to the centre-right parties' credibility. At any rate, the anti-shechita campaign's impact on elections results is not as interesting as the election results' impact on the slaughter bill is. The Labour Party and the Peasant Party were the election's winners with 35 and 4 new seats, respectively,⁹⁷² to a total of 59 and 26 out of 150 seats. The Conservatives, on the other hand, lost 14 of the 43 seats gained in the 1924 elections. Also the Liberal Party and the Liberal Left Party suffered losses, and for the first time in history, the Labour Party was the Storting's largest party, and was subsequently asked by the king to form a cabinet. Despite having won the elections, Christopher Hornsrud's Labour cabinet lasted for 18 days after having lost the confidence vote on its inaugural address. The short-lived Labour cabinet was followed on February 18, 1928 by a Liberal Party cabinet headed by Johan Ludwig Mowinckel.

Shortly after, former Minister of Agriculture Ole Bærøe, now MP and Agricultural Committee member, submitted a private bill to the Odelsting, identical to the slaughter bill that had been rejected by the majority of Ivar Lykke's cabinet almost a year earlier. On May 15, the Agricultural Committee considered the slaughter bill for a second time, but recommended that the Odelsting *not* address the bill that year. A majority of the committee, consisting of Labour Party MPs Johannes Bøe, Andreas Moan, Albert Moen, and Svend Skaardal, as well as Liberal Party MPs Olav Fjærli and Karl Kleppe, had voted for postponing the issue a third time due to 'the vast workload the committee is facing'. The minority, consisting of conservative MPs Ole Bærøe and Gunder Jahren and Peasant Party MPs Gjert Hegrenæs and Jon Sundby, meant the bill should be treated in the current session.⁹⁷³

After a relatively short but heated debate, a slight majority of 43 against 40 Odelsting members voted for the postponement. During the debate, Bærøe stated that he found it disappointing that the committee's majority wanted to postpone the bill yet another time, and

⁹⁷² The Labour Party and the breakaway Social-Democratic Party had merged before the elections.

⁹⁷³ 'Innst. O. nr. 57' in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1928. Sjette del. Instillinger og beslutninger*, p. 50.

claimed there was no need for further deliberations.⁹⁷⁴ He was supported by Jon Sundby of the Peasant Party, who commenced his speech by protesting against the president's instruction not to address the reality of the bill, only the Agricultural Committee's postponement proposal. Sundby felt that it was 'something in the direction of oppressing freedom of speech when this happens again and again', and regretted that two of the committee's Labour members 'are inclined to succumb to external concerns'.⁹⁷⁵ Svend Skaardal, who the previous year had been among the keenest to defend then Minister Bærøe's bill, claimed that work on new soil legislation and a bill on grain monopoly had taken all the committee's attention this year. Skaardal added that there also were new objections to the slaughter bill, making a more thorough review necessary. By this, Skaardal primarily referred to objections caused by the rise of silver fox breeding. Despite preferring to postpone the bill, he assured that he still was in favour of a law that 'restricts the way kosher slaughtering takes place'.⁹⁷⁶ Fjærli supported Skaardal's arguments for another postponement, and pledged to MPs to give the bill another year of consideration, until methods of killing fox at the fur farms and of kosher slaughtering had improved sufficiently.⁹⁷⁷

The silver-fox argument met as little understanding among Peasant Party MPs as the pledge to allow some time to work on improving kosher slaughtering did. Peasant Party MP Olav Os (1882–1953) of Sogn & Fjordane County, who incidentally also was chairman of the newly formed Norwegian Association for Silver Fox Breeding,⁹⁷⁸ assured that 'neither the silver fox, nor the blue fox wishes any postponement that will make them suffer for another year',⁹⁷⁹ while Jon Sundby claimed that 'our religious feelings become vulgarised [forflates] if we have to endure the killing method used with respect to kosher slaughtering and also regarding reindeer, as well as the silver fox'.⁹⁸⁰ Conservative MP Hambro spoke in favour of a postponement, as he reminded other speakers that the large number of new MPs in the current Storting might not be aware of the slaughter bill's implications.⁹⁸¹ However, despite talk of reindeer and fox, it should have been perfectly clear to all MPs what the issue really was

⁹⁷⁴ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1928. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 145.

⁹⁷⁵ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1928. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 146. Also, the conservative representative Anders Venger implicitly directed similar accusations at committee members favouring the postponement.

⁹⁷⁶ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1928. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, pp. 146–147 and p. 149.

⁹⁷⁷ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1928. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 147.

⁹⁷⁸ Haffner 1949, p. 567.

⁹⁷⁹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1928. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 148.

⁹⁸⁰ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1928. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 146.

⁹⁸¹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1928. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 150.

about. Olav Fjærli pointed out that the ‘main issue in this bill is for many the so-called kosher slaughtering’,⁹⁸² while Skaardal consistently referred to the bill as the ‘kosher slaughtering law’ and Sundby the ‘kosher slaughtering bill’.⁹⁸³

The third postponement of course provoked press responses, however, to a much lesser extent than the year before. The absence of a similar debate in 1928 thus confirms the issue’s role as an election campaign issue in 1927. There is also reason to ask whether the issue still was ‘newsworthy’ a third year in a row. Still, for the most passionate opponents, the last postponement was perceived as yet another verification of international Jewry’s influence. Of peasant-movement papers, both *Østlandets Blad* and *Østlændingen* hinted about Jewish influence, and the former regretted to see ‘so many of the country’s elected representatives genuflect for Jewish gold and influence’.⁹⁸⁴ *Østlændingen* complained about the lack of freedom of speech in this matter, and found it ‘striking’ that all Liberal MPs but one and the Conservative Party leader had voted for a postponement.⁹⁸⁵ Of the large capital newspapers, *Tidens Tegn* once more carried a letter by Pastor Peder Christensen, where he claimed to have been approached by ‘two of Norway’s leading Jews’ after his writings in *Tidens Tegn* before the Odelsting debate. The two Jews had delivered ‘some kind of petition, signed by the world’s wealthiest Jewish money men and bankers’, and for Christensen, this proved that Jews no longer were playing with hidden cards. Christensen characterised the postponement as ‘a shame and a disgraceful act’, and pointed a warning finger against proponents of shechita: ‘In our political parties, one speaks of ‘Russian gold’ to the Communists, and that Jews are in control. Speak silently about this, all semitically [*sic*] infected advocates of kosher slaughtering!’⁹⁸⁶

Also in *Fremtiden*, the campaign continued with renewed force, and now employed most of the repertoire of anti-Semitic stereotypes. In an editorial two days before the Odelsting debate, Torgeir Vraa gave an account of the issue so far, and described the ‘prejudice’ among Jews not to eat meat containing blood as the reason why Jews continued ‘this obvious cruelty against animals’. Vraa pointed out the irony in this: ‘The bloodthirsty Jew god, by the way the

⁹⁸² *Stortingsforhandlinger 1928. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 147.

⁹⁸³ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1928. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 149 and p. 150.

⁹⁸⁴ ‘Schächtningen’ in *Østlandets Blad*, 30.05.1928.

⁹⁸⁵ ‘Venstre og schächtningen. Er der ikke full talefrihet i denne sak?’ in *Østlændingen*, 23.05.1928.

⁹⁸⁶ Peder Christensen: ‘De bedste navn’ in *Tidens Tegn*, 23.05.1928. The piece was also printed in *Dyrenes Beskytter*, 1928, p. 57.

most gruesome of them all, becomes offended if this commandment is not obeyed'. With respect to the previous year's postponement, Vraa pointed out to readers that 'Everybody understood that the postponement was imposed by money Jews at home and abroad', and was greatly disappointed over Labour MPs having voted for the postponement. The fact that most of the Labour Party's parliamentary group had wanted a postponement this year was incomprehensible to Vraa, and he wrote that he 'Will not and cannot believe that the fear of money Jews also commands our party's group to an extent that they refrain from maintaining the nation's right to master its own legislation'.⁹⁸⁷ Vraa's wrath and indignation suggest that he had not merely used the issue opportunistically in the 1927 elections, but that there existed more profound anti-Semitic notions also in Labour-movement circles.⁹⁸⁸

Voting Patterns: Party Membership or Constituencies?

So far, the current and previous chapters have looked into only the Odelsting debates' contents, and have given less attention to how Odelsting members actually voted in the two postponement votes. Before addressing the final parliamentary debate and vote in 1929, it would be instructive to examine whether it is possible to reveal patterns in the MPs' voting behaviour in the 1927 and 1928 postponement votes. Even though MPs were not supposed to address the slaughter bill itself, only the postponement proposals, these debates still centred almost exclusively on kosher slaughtering. Thus, the subsequent votings may be regarded as indicators of party groups' and individual MPs' stances on kosher slaughtering. In the Peasant Party's case, examining its MPs' voting has less relevance, since all the party's Odelsting members voted against both the 1927 and the 1928 postponements, and finally against the proposal to exempt kosher slaughtering from the requirement of previous stunning in 1929. Apart from the Peasant Party, however, all the other parties' parliamentary groups were to a greater or lesser extent divided over the issue. Thus, it would be highly relevant to investigate what caused Labour, Liberal, Conservative, and Liberal Left Party MPs to vote for or against the postponements. Complete tables showing voting after party affiliation and constituency are found in the appendix, but in the following, the relation between party affiliation and constituencies will be discussed more in depth.

⁹⁸⁷ Editorial in *Fremtiden*, 19.05.1928. See also the editorial 23.05.1928 and a letter to the editor on 22.05.1928.

⁹⁸⁸ Similar rhetoric may also be found in other Labour Party newspapers in the East Country, such as *Østfold Arbeiderblad*, 16.05.1928 and *Rjukan Arbeiderblad*, 22.05.1928.

As already suggested, there seems to have been an overlap between kosher slaughtering opponents' home constituencies and regions where the issue received most attention in 1926 through petitions or local press. As a general rule, findings presented below suggest that East Country and Trøndelag Labour Party and Conservative Party MPs, and to a lesser extent Liberal Party MPs, voted together with these constituencies' Peasant Party MPs *against* the postponements. For these MPs, the bill recommending a prohibition of kosher slaughtering was sufficiently treated. On the other hand, Conservative, Liberal, and Labour MPs from the South Country, West Country, and Northern Norway were more inclined to vote *for* the postponements, and later in 1929 for the exemption.⁹⁸⁹ This tendency may be explained by the fact that East Country and Trøndelag constituencies were the Peasant Party's electoral strongholds,⁹⁹⁰ and by advocating and voting against kosher slaughtering, Conservative, Liberal, and Labour MPs might have attempted to challenge the Peasant Party MPs' hegemony as main opponents of shechita. The labour-movement press' increasing interest in the subject during the election year of 1927 also supports this hypothesis.

In the 1927 postponement vote, about two thirds (14 out of 20) of Labour MPs present in the Odelsting voted against the postponement, and as will be recalled from the preceeding Odelsting debate, some of the strongest opponents of kosher slaughtering belonged to the Labour Party (most notably Svend Skaardal of Sør-Trøndelag County). In the Liberal Party, the allocation was about the opposite, 17 out of 23 MPs voted for postponing the bill, while only 6 voted against postponement. Not surprisingly, a large majority of MPs belonging to the two parties in cabinet voted for Prime Minister Lykke's postponement proposal.⁹⁹¹ Still, almost a quarter of Conservative MPs (7 out of 30) did not follow the party's former and present leaders' (Lykke and Hambro) recommendation to postpone the bill. This was perhaps nothing unusual, given the absence of any tradition of a strong party whip in the Conservative Party, and given the comparatively great freedom of its MPs to vote according to their own

⁹⁸⁹ Apart from MPs representing the three largest city constituencies (Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim), MPs representing the Østfold, Hedmark and Oppland, Buskerud, Vestfold, Telemark and Aust-Agder, Vest-Agder and Rogaland, Møre & Romsdal, and Northern Norway common city constituencies are here counted among county constituencies. The survey is based on voting lists in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1927. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget* p. 1110f. and *Stortingsforhandlinger 1928. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 151.

⁹⁹⁰ Of the 22 Peasant Party MPs in the 1925–1927 Storting, 14 came from these regions, while the Liberal Party had only 4 of its 34 MPs in the same regions.

⁹⁹¹ Twenty-three of thirty Conservative MPs and all but one of the six from the Liberal Left Party.

consciences in issues like this.⁹⁹² Still, when the Conservative opponents' constituencies also are taken into account, it becomes clear that most Conservative MPs voting against the postponement hailed from regions where a majority of the other parties' MPs also voted against postponing the bill. These also happen to be constituencies where the Peasant Party stood particularly strong. For instance, two thirds of all Akershus constituency MPs voted against the postponement: two out of three Conservatives (Venger and Bryn) voted together with the Peasant Party MP (Sundby) and Labour Party MPs (Halvorsen and Nordanger).

Similarly, from Hedmark, the only Conservative MP present during the Odelsting meeting voted against the postponement together with all but one of the other Hedmark Country MPs. The great majority of the Hedmark bench's vote against the postponement further underlines the significance of constituencies for Odelsting MPs' voting behaviour. In addition to Conservative MP Skraastad, both Peasant Party MPs (Mellbye and Aalborg), one of two Labour MPs (Sæter), and the only Hedmark Communist MP (Monsen) all voted against the postponement, while only one Hedmark MP, Labour Party MP Oscar Nilssen, voted for the postponement. Nilssen was, however, one of the few East Country Labour MPs voting for the postponement. Among East Country and Trøndelag Labour Party MPs, most voted against the postponement. In Akershus, 2 of the 3 Labour MPs (Halvorsen and Nordanger) voted against, together with Conservative and Peasant Party MPs, and in neighbouring Buskerud constituency, both of the two Labour MPs present, Vraa and Hornsrud, voted – perhaps not very surprisingly – against the postponement. Also a majority of the Østfold bench (5 of 7) voted against the postponement, counting among these 2 of 3 Labour MPs (Thorvik and Aakre) and 1 of 2 Conservatives (Ileby).⁹⁹³ Lastly, also 4 out of 5 Buskerud MPs voted together with the Peasant Party MP (Saue) against the postponement, including two Labour MPs, later Prime Minister Hornsrud and editor Torgeir Vraa, as well as one Conservative (Irgens).

Although one of the Labour MPs from the inner East Country (Oscar Nilssen) had voted for the postponement, the only other Labour MP present from this region (Sæter) was joined in voting against the postponement by the Hedmark Communist MP (Monsen) and by the only Oppland MP from the non-Socialist worker and smallholder Labour Democrats (Moe).

⁹⁹² This had also been the case under Lykke's cabinet, where obstinate conservative MPs had created much frustration for the prime minister (Danielsen 1984, p. 153f.).

⁹⁹³ The remaining MPs were from the Peasant Party.

Oppland was also the county where the Peasant Party had most MPs present (3), while the Party mostly had two, but more often only one MP in other counties. Also in Nord-Trøndelag County, one of the few constituencies where the Peasant Party had two MPs, both these (Langhammer and Kirkeby-Garstad) were joined by the Labour MP (A. J. Moen) and the Liberal (Five) in voting against the postponement. In the same vein, the only Labour MP representing Sør-Trøndelag (Skaardal) voted against the postponement.

Among those voting *for* Lykke's postponement proposal in 1927, one may observe a geographical concentration in regions where, among other factors, the Peasant Party stood comparatively weak. This was the case in all cities that were single constituencies (Oslo, Bergen, and Trondheim), where all Bergen and Trondheim MPs and two of three Oslo MPs (Hambro and Liberal Left Party MP Wefring) voted for the postponement. In the two southernmost counties, Aust-Agder and Vest-Agder, 3 of 4 and 5 of 5, respectively, voted for the postponement. Noteworthy is that the Vest-Agder bench, whose only Peasant Party MP was absent, voted unanimously for the postponement. This was also the case for the Nordland County constituency, where among 5 MPs voting for the postponement (out of a total of 6 MPs), 3 represented the Conservative Party (Præsteng, Paulsen, and Høyer), and the remaining two represented the Liberal Party and Liberal Left Party, respectively (Caroliussen and Ytterstad). Also in neighbouring Troms County, the majority of MPs present (4 of 5) voted for the postponement, counting among these one of two Labour MPs (Tønder), the only Conservative (Laberg), as well as both Liberal Party MPs present (L. Hansen and A. K. Jakobsen).⁹⁹⁴

As will be recalled from the 1928 debate, all Labour Party and Liberal Party Agricultural Committee members had opted for a postponement 'due to the Committee's heavy workload', and 23 of the 29 Labour MPs present in the Odelsting that day voted for a postponement, while all Liberal MPs but one supported the postponement (18 of 19). In this case, we find further proof of a relatively strong consensus among Liberal Party MPs in the protocols of the party's parliamentary group. In a brief comment from a meeting on May 16, all Liberal MPs agreed that they 'could tolerate the kosher slaughtering'.⁹⁹⁵ Since Haakon Five, Liberal Party deputy chairman from 1927, and the Party's leading agricultural politician, had been granted a

⁹⁹⁴ In the remaining constituencies, the MPs were split more equally, and these are therefore of less interest in this connection.

⁹⁹⁵ *Protokoll for Venstres stortingsgruppe* 1976, p. 79.

leave of absence from the Storting after having been appointed county governor of Nord-Trøndelag in November 1927,⁹⁹⁶ the decision to postpone the bill must have felt much easier for the remaining parliamentary group.

Unfortunately, neither Conservative Party nor Labour Party parliamentary group archives are preserved for this period (lost during the war).⁹⁹⁷ However, it seems likely that the Labour Party put the whip on the vote on this occasion, given the sudden turn in Labour MPs' voting. Still, as many as 15 of 44 Labour Odelsting members were absent when the postponement was addressed on May 21, 1928, and especially Labour MPs of Hedmark, Oslo, Buskerud, and Telemark were conspicuously absent. Of the Oslo and Telemark bench, all Labour MPs were absent,⁹⁹⁸ while in Buskerud 3 of 5 were absent,⁹⁹⁹ and 3 of 4 Hedmark Labour MPs were absent.¹⁰⁰⁰ The high number of Labour absentees from counties where Labour press agitation against shechita had been most outspoken suggests that these MPs might have felt themselves caught between following the party's leading agricultural politician Svend Skaardal's recommendation of a postponement, or yielding to demands of Labour press editors, particularly Torgeir Vraa, and therefore preferred to stay out of the crossfire.

It is also worth mentioning that 50 of the 83 Odelsting members present that day had gained their seats in the elections the previous year, of which 19 gained their seats as a result of the Labour Party's huge electoral success.¹⁰⁰¹ It is therefore possible that many new Labour MPs were convinced by Hambro's advice to postpone the issue, since newly elected MPs were unlikely to be fully aware of the implications of Bærøe's slaughter bill. Still, 5 of the 'old' Labour MPs went from voting 'no' to postponing the bill in 1927 to 'yes' in 1928,¹⁰⁰² which strengthens the impression of a whip's being put on the vote. Among Labour MPs remaining unwilling to postpone the bill, the tendency of voting together with Peasant Party MPs is less clear than in the previous year. However, in Østfold, 2 of 4 Labour MPs joined the two

⁹⁹⁶ Haffner 1949, p. 227.

⁹⁹⁷ However, the protocols of the Peasant Party's parliamentary group exist for this period. From these, the issue was seemingly settled among the Peasant Party MPs already after the Agricultural Committee had addressed the issue for the first time in 1926 (The National Archives of Norway, Private Archives of the Peasant Party/Centre Party [PA-0652, Senterpartiet]: Møtebøker og protokoller. Bondepartiets gruppe i Stortinget 1922–1927, meeting in the parliamentary group 23.06.1926).

⁹⁹⁸ Alfred Madsen, Olaf Johansen, and Helga Karlsen for Oslo and Olav Steinnes and Olav Versto for Telemark.

⁹⁹⁹ Chr. Hornsrud's substitute representative Jon S. Leira and the city MPs Harald Haare and Andreas Nygaard.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Oscar Nilssen, Olav Sæter, and Fredrik Monsen, the latter a former Communist Party representative and Olav Scheflo's predecessor as editor of *Arbeideren*.

¹⁰⁰¹ Of the 15 Labour MPs *not* present, only 5 were new.

¹⁰⁰² Alvestad, Vangberg, A. J. Moen, Skaardal, and H. Halvorsen. Only Johs. Bergersen went in the opposite direction.

Peasant Party MPs present in voting against the postponement, while both in Nordland and Møre & Romsdal, where the Peasant Party had two MPs, respectively, there were also Labour MPs dissenting from the Labour Party majority's decision to postpone the bill.

In the Conservative Party, on the other hand, only two MPs (Svensen and Hambro), followed Hambro's advice to vote for the postponement, while the remaining 11 of the significantly reduced Conservative group voted against the postponement.¹⁰⁰³ The majority of Conservative's voting against the postponement may be regarded as a consequence of the Conservatives' loss of power in cabinet. That the majority of the party's parliamentary group ignored party leader Hambro's advice to postpone the bill confirms the Conservatives' lacking use of the party whip in the question – at least once out of cabinet. More importantly, by voting 'no' on postponing the bill a second time, Conservative MPs were able to free themselves and the party from accusations of being under the influence of foreign Jewish financiers and bankers.

The absence of a quarter of the Odelsting MPs during the voting on the afternoon of May 21, 1928 (only 83 of the 112 Odelsting MPs were present), may contribute to give a false picture of voting behaviour within the different parties. This erroneous picture might be corrected by looking at the present MPs' constituencies of origin. When looking at these numbers, the same preponderance of MPs *against* the postponement in the East Country and Trøndelag constituencies once again appears, and also the corresponding preponderance of votes *for* the postponement in southern, western, and northern constituencies. The largest overweight of votes against the postponement is found among Oppland MPs (all), Akershus (4 of 5), Hedmark (5 of 6), Østfold and Nord-Trøndelag (both 4 of 6), while Vest-Agder and Troms (all MPs present), Rogaland (4 of 5), Finnmark (2 of 3), and Hordaland (3 of 4) stand out in the other direction. To a certain extent, the latter constituencies overlap with the counties where the Liberal Party stood strong and the Peasant Party correspondingly weaker. Thus, the geographical concentration of MPs voting for the postponement in the south, west, and north may simply result from the Liberal Party's parliamentary groups' consensus to vote for the postponement. On the other hand, the geographical concentration gives some indication of precisely why Liberal MPs 'could tolerate the kosher slaughtering'. With Five away, they nearly all represented constituencies where agitation against kosher slaughtering through local

¹⁰⁰³ Bærøe, Bühring-Dehli, Witzøe, Præsteng, Paulsen, Nordlie, Darre-Jenssen, Bruun, Blom, Ørbæk, Venger, and Gram.

press and petitions was non-existent. To vote for a postponement must have been perceived as fairly unproblematic for MPs from regions where opinions on kosher slaughtering had little or no significance in the local public debate.

Conclusion

Even though voting patterns from the 1927 and 1928 Odelsting meetings cannot explain what reasons each MP had for voting for or against a postponement, the patterns discussed above certainly strengthen the impression from the press that the most ardent opponents of kosher slaughter were found in the East Country and Trøndelag labour movement and peasant movement. That almost all Conservative MPs voted against the 1928 postponement and eventually against an exemption for shechita in 1929 should be understood as a result of the altered political context after the 1927 elections. After the peasant press and labour press had used the leading centre-right politician's warnings of a kosher slaughter prohibition's possible negative effects in a smear campaign against the Conservative Party, the Conservative Party had unambiguously become associated with the issue. When the Conservatives lost their position in cabinet, Conservative MPs could refute accusations of the Conservative Party's being a weak party, dependent on foreign financial powers, by voting against the postponement of the slaughter bill, thus distancing the party from the issue. In the conservative press, however, the issue disappeared already in connection with Prime Minister Lykke's recommendation to postpone the issue in May 1927. The peasant- and labour-movement press, on the other hand, intensified the accusations when a majority of the two leading centre-right parties supported the 1927 postponement. Moreover, the renewed interest in labour press and peasant press in 1927 underlines the discursive interplay between press debates, parliamentary debates, and the MPs' voting behaviour.

As will be recalled from the previous chapter, the kosher slaughtering issue had from 1926 onwards attracted the attention of highly diverse groups, each having their own motives for attacking the Jewish slaughter method publicly. The countercultural author Hulda Garborg's writings in *Nationen* represent notions widespread in peasant-movement press of the almost mystical relations between the Norwegian people's national character and Norwegian animals. The animals, given human-like features and even a sense of rationality, were viewed as true and loyal to Norwegian farmers, who in turned owed their animals the least painful death possible. On the other hand, the Jews were regarded the metaphysical opposite of

Norwegians in terms of kindness to animals, and their treatment of animals allegedly offended the most noble feelings among Norwegian farmers. Aker Chief of Police Johan Søhr, who regarded kosher slaughtering as a problem of public morality, and a potential source of immoral behaviour and degeneration, represents a second current in the 1926 anti-shechita agitation. For reasons similar to those he had cited in working to prevent immigration of Eastern European Jews, Gypsies, and Travellers, and even casual workers coming into the capital from rural districts, Søhr joined the animal protection movement's campaign against kosher slaughtering.

The third current underlying anti-shechita agitation in 1926 was the criticism of Jewish religious practice based on religious conceptions of the Jewish people's role in salvation history. Certain clergymen expressing their opinions in the press debates leaned on the Jewish Mission's understanding of the Jewish people's maintainance of religious and cultural customs as crucial obstacles to their salvation. With the new covenant, there was no need for ancient Jewish rites, and Jews' blindness prevented them from realising the true 'spirit' behind Mosaic Law. These anti-Judaic notions, contingent on protestant theology and text-interpretation, were mixed with modern images of Jews as conveyors of modernity and atheism, often implying the existence of a Jewish world conspiracy.

Objections both to scientifically untenable arguments and to religious intolerance were delivered by the country's veterinary experts, with Oslo Health Council veterinary Olav Skar in the lead. The veterinaries emphasised the need for a broad examination of the issue, an examination that considered scientific, ethical, and religious aspects of kosher slaughtering. Skar, hailing from a grundtvigian Christian nationalist environment, emphasised religious freedom and positive sides of orthodox Jewry, while simultaneously using his veterinary expertise to call into question animal protectionists' claims of the Jewish slaughter method's cruelty. These claims were also challenged by Fridtjof Nansen, who viewed the animal protection movement's attempts to prohibit shechita as yet another expression of the parochialism of lay opinions.

Many of these motives and arguments were picked up in the 1927 Odelsting debate, most prominently the notions of noble Norwegian sensitivities towards animals in contrast to Jewish brutality. In order to counter the arguments raised of religious freedom, Odelsting MPs opposing kosher slaughtering redefined the 'Norwegian sensitivities' into 'religious feelings'.

In addition, tensions between scientific knowledge and lay judgements were also reflected in the MPs' argumentation. While opponents of kosher slaughter justified the issue's having been sufficiently addressed based on the prolonged and increasing resistance in the populace, others pointed out that not a single independent scientific account on the issue had been presented to the Odelsting.

If the press debates of spring 1926 were reflected in the Odelsting plenary meeting of June 30, 1927, the 1928 press debates reflected the new arguments appearing in the 1927 parliamentary debate. When the hitherto unused argument of a kosher slaughter prohibition as a means of countering foreign Jewish powers' interference in Norwegian legislation was introduced in the Odelsting meeting of June 30, 1927, the press debates changed, so to say, overnight to focus almost exclusively on these allegations. With parliamentary elections ahead in October 1927, leading conservative and liberal politicians' calls to act with prudence so as not to put the country's reputation abroad at risk could not have arrived at a more convenient moment for their political opponents. Peasant-movement press and some prominent papers of the labour-movement press turned the issue into an election campaign issue for a while, but after the elections, the issue lost most of its news potential. By the time the Odelsting addressed the issue a second time, in May 1928, consensus had been reached among Liberal Party MPs and among most Labour MPs to postpone the bill a third time. Despite this consensus, a number of Labour MPs, predominantly representing Trøndelag and the East Country constituencies, chose to join the other parties in these regions (almost exclusively the Peasant Party or the Conservatives), and voted against a postponement.

The controversy's geographical centre of gravity in the East Country and Trøndelag has been touched upon on several occasions, but until now it has mainly been explained by the Peasant Party's electoral strength in these regions, and by subsequent attempts of other parties to gain 'ownership' over the issue and thus compete with the Peasant Party. Inversely, regions where the Liberal Party stood stronger, and the Peasant Party correspondingly weaker, most MPs voted for the two postponements, irrespective of party affiliation. However, there were also other factors making MPs from these regions more inclined to tolerate shechita, and these motives will be addressed in the following chapter on the final parliamentary debate in 1929.

4.3: The Final Parliamentary Debate

Apart from reactions in parts of the labour-movement and peasant-movement press after the 1928 postponement, the 1929 parliamentary debate was not preceded by press coverage similar to that in 1926 or 1927. Instead, the Storting was now the main site of the controversy during deliberations on the slaughter bill in the Odelsting on June 12, 1929. Nevertheless, the parliamentary debate largely reflected the preceding three years' press debates, and the debate returned from revolving around its opponents' accusations of foreign intervention to kosher slaughter itself. The debates of 1926 and 1927 are thus essential for analysing the discursive fields intersecting in the final and decisive parliamentary debate in 1929. Some concepts and notions are emphasised in the following. The discussion about the concept 'religions freedom' reveals that at least two distinct understandings of this concept existed among the MPs: first a 'secular' understanding, not different from how the concept usually is understood today, and a second, a more religiously based understanding, based on the Jewish people's special status. The former was raised by Labour Party MP and clergyman Kristian Tønder, and was seemingly shared by some fellow Labour MPs, and some Conservative and Liberal Party city constituency MPs. The second understanding of the concept seemingly contributed to gaining some support for exempting kosher slaughter among MPs from the South-West constituencies (Vest-Agder, Rogaland, and Hordaland counties). The majority, on the other hand, rejected both concepts of religious freedom and minority rights completely, and instead claimed that it was foremost the concern for Norwegian farmers, and the 'strong public opinion', that should prevail.

Instead, the majority endorsed arguments of Peasant Party leaders, who emphasised the insurmountable gap between the inherent kindness to animals among Norwegian farmers, and the 'southern' and 'Mediterranean' attitudes towards animals among the Jews, as well as the alleged cruelty of their 'ritual' slaughter. Their attitudes towards the traditional slaughter methods of Sami reindeer herders reveal a double standard in the question, and suggest that Jews were treated differently because they were Jews, unwanted in the country in the first place. This view was most clearly reflected among the Peasant Party MPs, and should also be read in light of the party's immigration policies and views on racial purity, in addition to the

anti-Semitic and anti-Communist currents documented by Simonsen.¹⁰⁰⁴ In the eyes of Peasant Party MPs, a prohibition of kosher slaughtering would make the country less attractive for Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe.

The Agricultural Committee's Recommendations

More than a year after the Agricultural Committee's majority had requested the Odelsting to postpone the slaughter law for another year in order to prepare the bill more thoroughly, the Committee finally submitted recommendations to the Odelsting on May 31, 1929, basically identical to the 1927 recommendations. The Committee's majority found it necessary within the current session to adopt a law on slaughtering that would ensure 'more humane killing of our domestic animals than still often is the case in our country, [...] even though the killing methods have improved considerably recently'.¹⁰⁰⁵ This somewhat contradictory passage for justifying the law confirms the real purpose of the law: why would a law specifically addressing slaughter methods be necessary if methods already were improving through the use of other means? The answer is to be found in the wish to eliminate what were perceived as the greatest obstacles remaining for the complete implementation of previous stunning methods in Norway, namely the practice of shechita. The Committee's majority's sudden urgency in adopting the law was questioned by Olav Fjærli, who instead suggested that the proposed slaughter bill's paragraphs should be incorporated in the animal protection legislation already underway, and announced by the cabinet in the king's inaugural address to the Storting the same year.¹⁰⁰⁶

Fjærli's questioning of the matter's urgency does not seem entirely out of place when also taking into account the majority's view on the *other* obstacle to the complete implementation of previous stunning methods in Norway, the method of slaughtering tame reindeer in Northern Norway. In this instance, the majority admitted that it

¹⁰⁰⁴ Simonsen 2012.

¹⁰⁰⁵ 'Innst. O. XXII (1929)' in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Sjette del. Innstillinger og beslutninger*, p. 4. The majority consisted of all members but Fjærli: Jahren, Bærøe, Bøe, Hegrenæs, Kleppe, Moan, Moen, Skaardal, and Sundby.

¹⁰⁰⁶ 'Innst. O. XXII' (1929) in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Sjette del. Innstillinger og beslutninger*, p. 5.

eventually would be necessary to introduce a killing method involving stunning before blooddraining, even though one presumably would have to accept to move forward step by step due to the special circumstances under which slaughtering of tame reindeer until now has taken place.¹⁰⁰⁷

With regard to kosher slaughtering, on the other hand, the majority did not find any ‘special circumstances’ that suggested the same degree of patience as with the traditional Sami slaughtering method. The committee concurred with most of the Agricultural Committee’s 1927 recommendations, and argued that an exemption for the Jewish slaughter method would ‘undermine the entire law’. The only change in the 1929 recommendations from the Agricultural Committee’s original recommendations two years earlier was a new paragraph (§ 4) giving the king the prerogative to issue ‘general rules for the killing of dogs, cats, silver fox, and other fur animals kept in captivity’ to solve objections the Committee had raised the previous year regarding fur farming.¹⁰⁰⁸ The committee also recommended including a paragraph giving the cabinet the possibility of exempting certain parts of the country for a limited time to allow implementing previous stunning methods also among the Sami reindeer herders.¹⁰⁰⁹

Although Olav Fjærli refrained from proposing an alternative wording of the legislative text on this occasion, he declared that he would reserve the right to propose to the Odelsting that the slaughter bill be submitted back to the cabinet, requesting the cabinet to include slaughter regulations in the new animal protection law.¹⁰¹⁰ Should he not gain the Odelsting’s support for this, he would instead propose an alternative legal text, identical to the one proposed by the majority of Lykke’s cabinet in 1927, including an exemption for kosher slaughtering. Fjærli did not justify this solely out of concern for the Jewish minority. He added that a law that also would forbid the Danish-American slaughter method could be harmful for the country’s pork exports, and referred to the claim that bacon from pigs slaughtered according to this method gained higher prices on the British Isles,¹⁰¹¹ a claim that the Committee’s majority rejected.¹⁰¹² Fjærli’s sudden concern for pork exports could of course be explained by his background as a champion for the smallholders. However, it seems more likely that this

¹⁰⁰⁷ ‘Innst. O. XXII (1929)’ in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Sjette del. Innstillinger og beslutninger*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰⁸ ‘Innst. O. XXII (1929)’ in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Sjette del. Innstillinger og beslutninger*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰⁹ ‘Innst. O. XXII (1929)’ in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Sjette del. Innstillinger og beslutninger*, p. 4 and p. 8.

¹⁰¹⁰ The slaughter regulations were eventually included in the new animal protection law of 1979, which replaced both the slaughtering law of 1929 and the animal protection law of 1935 (Frøslie 1997, p. 14).

¹⁰¹¹ ‘Innst. O. XXII (1929)’ in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Sjette del. Innstillinger og beslutninger*, p. 6.

¹⁰¹² ‘Innst. O. XXII (1929)’ in *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Sjette del. Innstillinger og beslutninger*, p. 5.

was an attempt to gain support for an exemption clause among MPs from regions with economic interests in pork exports. In this case, the committee's majority, a number of who came from these regions, appear as a more reliable source in their rejection of the notion that bacon from pigs slaughtered according to the Danish-American method would be more sellable. This notion had also been dismissed previously by inquiries in England made by the Ministry of Agriculture through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁰¹³

A New Concept of Religious Freedom?

Although the slaughter bill itself was not addressed before 1929, the postponement debates in 1927 and 1928 were little other than debates on kosher slaughtering, and the same would be the case in the session where the actual bill finally was addressed. Still, Olav Fjærli opened the debate with a plea to view the issue in a larger context: 'The question whether the Jews should be allowed to slaughter 200–300 cattle and some sheep according to their method is a minor question compared to the question of obtaining better slaughtering methods for us Norwegians'.¹⁰¹⁴ Even opponents of kosher slaughtering applauded the notion that this aspect was subordinate. Former Minister of Agriculture and Conservative MP Ole Bærøe regretted that 'this aspect of our slaughtering law has gained such an amount of attention in man-to-man discussions, in newspapers, and in people's minds'.¹⁰¹⁵ Even Jon Sundby attempted to reduce the question's importance, and concurred with Bærøe: 'had it not been for the kosher slaughter question, there would have been no minority on this issue'.¹⁰¹⁶

Although Fjærli claimed to be more concerned with other aspects, such as remnants of traditional slaughter methods, he thoroughly described shechita, and suggested a compromise should he not gain enough support for his initial thought of proposing that slaughter regulations be included in the future animal protection law. Fjærli suggested that the law should include a temporal exemption clause to give the Jewish community time to develop a slaughter method where animals were stunned immediately after the incision. This method had already been implemented in Austria and was currently being experimented with in

¹⁰¹³ See correspondence with the Norwegian Consulate in Newcastle in The National Archives of Norway, The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet V. Veterinærkontoret, Saksarkiv: No. 102.

¹⁰¹⁴ The number is confirmed by an account given by Harry Koritzinsky in the Scandinavian Jewish journal *Israeliten* in 1925 (Nos. 10–12, p. 19). According to Koritzinsky, the annual meat consumption of the Jewish community was about 50,000 kg, and given the amount of meat per animal being about 200–250 kg, these numbers correspond well with Fjærli's.

¹⁰¹⁵ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 566.

¹⁰¹⁶ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 568.

Sweden, according to Fjærli.¹⁰¹⁷ In his speech to the Odelsting, Fjærli abandoned the arguments of pork-export interests and concentrated on the religious freedom of the Jews:

We should note that this concerns a religious minority in this country [...]. How far shall we go? In my opinion, we should go far enough to ensure animals an entirely humane slaughtering; but if we do this, we should also try to meet the Jewish religious minority half way.¹⁰¹⁸

However, Fjærli maintained his original position that slaughtering regulations rather should be included in the coming legislation on animal protection, and declared to the Odelsting that he would propose this if he got enough support for the idea during the Odelsting's debate.

Although Fjærli would receive little support for yet another postponement, Prime Minister Mowinckel further elaborated Fjærli's concern for the proposed bill's implications for the Jews' religious freedom. The prime minister argued in a manner that would appeal to believers as well as non-believers (as himself) firstly by emphasising the irrational nature of the practice, and secondly, the great importance the practice had for Jews – comparable to that of a sacrament for Christians:

We may feel – and I guess most of us do – that this is superstition, we cannot understand it; but for the religious Jews, those who genuinely live according to their faith, this is an extremely important question, it is [...] almost a sacramental issue.¹⁰¹⁹

Mowinckel was not convinced that the few animals slaughtered yearly according to the Jewish method would suffer to an extent that would justify restrictions on a religious practice. This clearly 'secular' argument of religious freedom was supported by another atheist, former Communist, now Labour Party representative Sverre Støstad of Trondheim, who emphasised that he was not against the prohibition for 'religious reasons'. Since he himself was an atheist, it was not as a religious person he felt sympathy towards the Jews' claim in this question. Responding to some Peasant Party MPs' claim that the law was not directed towards Jews as such, and that Jews simply had to comply with the law, Støstad declared that 'I find it unjust that we, with a law in hand so to say, will force a certain religious community to do things contrary to their conscience'.¹⁰²⁰

¹⁰¹⁷ The method was in use in Sweden at least from 1952 to 1979 (Berg 2005).

¹⁰¹⁸ *Stortingsforhandling 1929. Ottende del. Forhandling i Odelstinget*, pp. 561–562.

¹⁰¹⁹ *Stortingsforhandling 1929. Ottende del. Forhandling i Odelstinget*, p. 567.

¹⁰²⁰ *Stortingsforhandling 1929. Ottende del. Forhandling i Odelstinget*, p. 577.

This ‘secular’ understanding of religious freedom also found its way to even more unexpected quarters than a former communist, namely in the argumentation of the clergyman Kristian Tønder of Troms County, also representing the Labour Party. Quoting Martin Luther [*sic*] that it was ‘not advisable for any person to act contrary to his own conscience’, Tønder equated the ‘Jewish conscience’ with the Christian, stating that ‘Religious notions of observant Jews should be respected as highly and as much as one respects notions of observant Christians’.¹⁰²¹ He also rejected the notion that ‘Christian religious feelings’ should take precedence over the Jews’ religious feelings, simply by rejecting that the issue concerned any Christian religious feelings at all.¹⁰²² Former prime minister and leader of the Conservative Party, Ivar Lykke, argued in similar terms, but emphasising the principle of religious freedom’s long tradition in Norway. In Lykke’s view, ‘we have an extensive religious freedom in our country’, and since the Jews had been given permission to enter the country in the first place, there should be laid no restrictions on their religious practice, including kosher slaughtering. Lykke’s somewhat weak argument of the ‘extensive religious freedom’ in Norway, demonstrates how the lack of any legal definition of religious freedom contributed to confuse the debate, and subsequently also made it unproblematic to reject the argument of religious freedom entirely.

Interestingly, none of the arguments concerning religious freedom explicitly took up the ‘special status’ of the Jews in the salvation history, as some of the MPs that spoke for a postponement in 1928 had done (Gimre and Tveteraas). On the contrary, this ‘religious’ argument of religious freedom was turned upside down by one of those who had argued for a postponement in 1928, Liberal MP Rasmus Tveteraas. As he had previously done in his 1928 speech, Tveteraas established that kosher slaughtering was not described in the Pentateuch, and that the Jew’ regulations of slaughtering were to be found in the Talmud. Still, since the Talmud was a ‘holy book for the Jews’, Tveteraas had admitted that its prescriptions should be respected. However, a year later, Tveteraas had changed his view in favour of a prohibition, and claimed that kosher slaughtering’s Talmudic origins were exactly why it should *not* be respected: ‘Even though one should value this code of conduct exceedingly highly, it cannot be compared to or ranked next to canonical scripture’.¹⁰²³ Thus, Tveteraas now argued from a Protestant principle of *sola scriptura*, rather than respecting the Jews’ own

¹⁰²¹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 576.

¹⁰²² *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 580.

¹⁰²³ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 574

tradition of scripture and interpretation, exactly like Saxlund and some clergymen had done in the 1926 debate.

Another clergy MP, Ole Konrad Steinholt, also representing the Labour Party and a leading member of the clergy in the northernmost diocese of Nord-Hålogaland,¹⁰²⁴ concurred with this view, stating that ‘fortunately, the world has moved forwards since the Mosaic commandments were given thousands of years ago’. Steinholt disagreed with his colleague Tønder’s principle of treating Christian and Jewish conscience equally: ‘As a member of a legislative assembly, [...] I must vote in accordance with my own conscience, and not ask what this or that conscience tells. [...] Many people have suffered death on the stake or on the cross in the name of religion’.¹⁰²⁵ Tønder replied by insisting that ‘It is the Jews’ [religious] notions we have to take into consideration in this case, not ours’, and rejected the antiquity of the practice as a valid argument against shechita: ‘I do not find it particularly fair to state that it is many years since Moses lived and that the world, progress, has moved forward since then’. He reminded Steinholt sarcastically that ‘it is also many years since Christ lived’.¹⁰²⁶

Demonising the Jews

Jon Sundby of the Peasant Party rejected the notion that a prohibition of kosher slaughtering would mean forcing restrictions on the Jews’ religious freedom, and that prescriptions in the Mosaic Law had any relevance for the issue at all. He pointed out that ‘Jews in our country have generally ceased even to observe the Sabbath’, and also reminded the Odelsting that many other commandments in the Mosaic Law had been abandoned:

[The commandment] that those who eat blood shall be exterminated by its own people, as it is stated, I believe they have ceased to practice, and if they wanted to commence with exterminating, that is death by stoning, everyone that in one way or another has eaten something of blood, I do believe that our country would oppose this.¹⁰²⁷

The passage Sundby had in mind, Leviticus 17 verses 10–15, says nothing about stoning, although the 1904 Norwegian (Riksmål) translation of the Bible, as well as earlier and later

¹⁰²⁴ Steinholt (1888–1955) was from 1925 dean of the predominantly Sami-speaking Hammerfest deanery in Finnmark and later, from 1931, dean of Trondenes in Troms.

¹⁰²⁵ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 579.

¹⁰²⁶ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 580.

¹⁰²⁷ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 569.

editions until the 2011 edition, use the verb ‘exterminate’ [utrydde].¹⁰²⁸ That this would mean death by stoning must stand for Sundby’s own account. Although hardly any MP could have taken Sundby seriously and believed that Jews would insist on literal interpretation and observance of such passages in the Mosaic Law, Sundby nevertheless contributed to further demonise the Jews by comparing the prescriptions of shechita with the death penalty for eating anything containing blood.

Also, another Peasant Party leader played on such motives, Jens Hundseid (1883–1965), who a couple years later, in 1932, became prime minister after Peasant Party Prime Minister Peder Kolstad’s sudden death, and who eventually joined Quisling’s National Unity Party after the German invasion in 1940.¹⁰²⁹ However, perhaps more interesting in this regard are Hundseid’s attitudes towards foreigners and immigrants and his racist convictions as they appeared in other parliamentary debates in the same period. Two years after the kosher slaughtering debate in the Odelsting, Hundseid attacked the Liberal Party cabinet’s immigration policy after Prime Minister Mowinckel’s inaugural speech to the Storting, and claimed that the greatest danger of immigration was not economic (poor immigrants ‘milking the treasury’), but in terms of racial biology:

Many foreigners coming into the country are, in terms of racial biology, of inferior quality. They possess poor genetic material, while possessing a great vitality in terms of breeding. Our race suffers under this immigration. Our healthy Nordic race is being mixed in a way that is unfortunate for the race’s future.¹⁰³⁰

Prime Minister Mowinckel replied by criticising Hundseid and the Peasant Party for not realising ‘that we are a part of the world’.¹⁰³¹ Hundseid defended his party’s demand for limiting immigration, by claiming that with Mowinckel’s views on immigration, the country would turn into an ‘international waste bin, in terms of racial biology’.¹⁰³² Also in the wake of the *Anschluss* in 1938, attempts of the ‘Nansen Relief’, a Norwegian refugee organisation founded by Fridtjof Nansen’s son Odd Nansen, to admit Jewish refugees from Austria, was met with strong opposition from Hundseid and other Peasant Party politicians. According to

¹⁰²⁸ ‘Og naar nogen av Israels hus eller av de fremmede der opholder sig midt iblandt dem, æder nogen blod, da vil jeg sætte mit aasyn imot den som æder blodet, og jeg vil udrydde ham av alt hans folks midte’ (3. Mos. 17, 10 in *Bibelen* 1904). The 2011 translation uses the verb ‘expel’ [utstøte].

¹⁰²⁹ Despite this, Hundseid and Quisling were known to have been political enemies during Quisling’s period in the Peasant Party, and it has been suggested that Hundseid was forced into Quisling’s party after the invasion (Borgen 1999, p. 252f.).

¹⁰³⁰ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1931. Syvende del. Forhandlinger i Stortinget*, p. 109.

¹⁰³¹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1931. Syvende del. Forhandlinger i Stortinget*, p. 116.

¹⁰³² *Stortingsforhandlinger 1931. Syvende del. Forhandlinger i Stortinget*, p. 208.

historian Ragnar Ulstein, Hundseid was a ‘proponent of racism and xenophobia, as well as [the notion] ‘Norwegian jobs for Norwegians’’.¹⁰³³ Hundseid was far from alone in the Storting in wanting to prevent immigration during the 1920s and 1930s, but few went as far in their rhetoric as Hundseid.¹⁰³⁴

Hundseid’s extreme views on Jews and immigrants, and subsequent membership in the National Unity Party, have by some chroniclers of the present-day Centre Party been explained as views particular to Hundseid. These historians have sought to explain Hundseid’s extreme views by citing his unstable and difficult mental condition.¹⁰³⁵ However, as the author Per Otto Borgen asks in the chapter about Hundseid in his book on Norwegian prime ministers: ‘Why did his fellow party members make him party leader, parliamentary leader, and prime minister’, if he was as ‘bad’ as he has been portrayed in the official historiography of the Peasant Party/Centre Party? There is much suggesting that Hundseid in retrospect has been made a scapegoat for currents within the Peasant Party that he was far from alone in representing in the 1920s and 1930s; currents that the Party later has wanted to dissociate itself from. Hundseid’s statements in the kosher slaughtering affair, which often had been cited as the most extreme utterances in the whole affair,¹⁰³⁶ did not differ markedly in content from other Peasant Party politicians’ statements, neither in 1929 nor earlier. This should not be surprising – historian Olav Rovde has demonstrated how racial biology played a central part in the peasant movement’s cultural ideology already from the early 1920s, and how this in turn affected the Peasant Party’s immigration policy,¹⁰³⁷ while Kjetil Simonsen more specifically has illustrated the role of anti-Semitism in the Party’s ideological outlook in this period.¹⁰³⁸

In the debate over the slaughter bill in 1929, Hundseid did not speak explicitly in categories of racial biology, but did not refrain from using negative stereotypes of Jews. Firstly, Hundseid found it strange that kosher slaughtering was an absolute obligation for Jews, given ‘how leniently they treat many of the commandments in the Mosaic Law and the Old Testament in general’. Secondly, Hundseid deliberately confused categories by stating that ‘Even if kosher-

¹⁰³³ Ulstein 1995, p. 14. Curiously, Ulstein identifies the main proponents of more liberal immigration politics as Sverre Støstad of the Labour Party, C. J. Hambro of the Conservatives, and Mowinkel of the Liberal Party.

¹⁰³⁴ Kolsrud 1990, p. 12f. See also Lorenz 1992, p. 51f.

¹⁰³⁵ Gabrielsen 1970, p. 55ff.; Hauge 1980, p. 55ff.

¹⁰³⁶ Mendelsohn 1969, p. 578; Johansen 1984, p. 70; Metcalf 1989, p. 39.

¹⁰³⁷ Rovde 1997.

¹⁰³⁸ Simonsen 2009; Simonsen 2011 and Simonsen 2012.

butchered meat [schächtet kjøtt] is a sacrament for certain Jews, they must stick to other animals than ours'. Of course, nobody had claimed that the meat itself was a sacrament for the Jews. However, Hundseid used Mowinckel's comparison of shechita's importance within Judaism to that of a sacrament among Christians as a pretext to turn the argument into well-known images of deliberately cruel Jewish sacrificial rituals and of bloodthirsty Jews: 'we have not invited the Jews to this country, and we have no obligation to supply the Jews with animals for their religious orgies'. According to Hundseid, these 'religious orgies' were 'ceremonies that conflict with and offend our moral sentiments, with regard to both animals and humans'.¹⁰³⁹

For Hundseid, this was not an issue of religious freedom, since the 'idea of humanity' was a 'holy principle' taking precedence over religious freedom.¹⁰⁴⁰ By explicitly framing kosher slaughtering as 'a sacrament for the Jews' and as 'religious orgies', Hundseid invoked notions of Jewish crudeness, a motive that also was taken up by fur-trade farmer and Peasant Party MP Olav Os. In his speech to the Odelsting on June 12, 1929, Os included common stereotypes of 'southern' peoples as particularly cruel in their handling with animals:

I am willing to admit that the Jewish slaughter method might be suitable in a warm climate where people have another way of thinking and a more heartless and rough behaviour towards both people and livestock. But here it is not appropriate. One should always find oneself in the proper laws, customs, and mentalities in nations where one wishes to be guests.

Os, who himself had found killing methods applied to silver fox and other fur animals being questioned during the Odelsting debate the previous year, was careful to contrast Jews and other 'southern' peoples' behaviour towards animals with that of Christian Northern Europeans: 'It is precisely a task for Christian and enlightened people to make the journey from life to death as painless, easy and peaceful as possible'.¹⁰⁴¹

Norwegian and Jewish Animal Cruelty

Some defenders of the exemption clause refuted the notions of Norwegian farmers' great kindness to livestock by pointing out that there still existed a widespread lack of humane treatment of domestic animals in the Norwegian countryside. By claiming this, they did not attempt to relativise the practice of shechita and thus acknowledge its supposedly cruel

¹⁰³⁹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 578.

¹⁰⁴⁰ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 577.

¹⁰⁴¹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 573.

character, but rather attempted to point out hypocrisy among opponents of shechita and their conspicuous urgency of prohibiting kosher slaughtering. The defenders asked the Odelsting why exactly kosher slaughtering should be the target of such legislation, while other, far more cruel practices continued undisturbed. For instance, the Mowinckel Cabinet's minister of agriculture, Hans Aarstad,¹⁰⁴² claimed that farmers often were 'obliged to treat the animals less humanely than one should wish, many out of negligence [gammel slendrian]',¹⁰⁴³ while Prime Minister Mowinckel encouraged MPs to 'look nearer home' [gripe i vår egen barm], and pointed out the existence of traditional slaughtering methods not being affected by the new law:

It is being said that we, out of concern for animals, should adopt this new slaughter law. All right, that is good and just. But when one refuses to grant an exemption, let us then take into account that around our vast country, there is still taking place slaughtering that cannot be said to be very recommendable, and that surely will continue to take place, despite this law.¹⁰⁴⁴

Also, Sverre Støstad stated that he did not think that there 'is a single farmer in this country who cannot admit for himself that he, to a greater or lesser extent, is not taking part in any cruelty against animals'.¹⁰⁴⁵ He claimed that 'the slaughtering method that previously was, and to a certain extent still is being practiced in rural districts, is, alas, not humane', while also pointing out other forms of animal cruelty, such as the taming of young horses and the use of hunting traps.¹⁰⁴⁶

Støstad was accused by Østfold County Peasant Party MP, and later prime minister, Peder Kolstad (1878–1932) of knowing 'very little of how Norwegian farmers treat their animals when he makes such allegations', and Kolstad further characterised Støstad's claim as 'improper'.¹⁰⁴⁷ However, Støstad, who noted that he had grown up on a farm, claimed to know 'how things are done on a farm'.¹⁰⁴⁸ As demonstrated in part 3, the traditional slaughter methods Støstad and Mowinckel referred to were probably still in use many places well into

¹⁰⁴² Hans Aarstad (1878–1954) served as minister of agriculture in Mowinckel's second cabinet (1928–1931). Like several of the other defenders of kosher slaughter in the Storting, Aarstad hailed from Rogaland. Aarstad also had a similar background as teacher in agronomy as his party colleague Olav Fjørli, and was for many years headmaster of an agricultural school in Rogaland.

¹⁰⁴³ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 572.

¹⁰⁴⁴ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 568.

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 577.

¹⁰⁴⁶ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 580.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 579.

¹⁰⁴⁸ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 580.

the 20th century. Kolstad's complete rejection of the existence of such practices among Norwegian farmers should rather be read in the light of the recurring notions of the deep love and compassion towards animals among Norwegians.

However, not only notions of the Norwegian farmer's inherent kindness towards livestock were called into question by defenders of the exemption clause. Also, other practices, such as vivisection, and not least the traditional reindeer slaughtering among the Sami, were pointed out as more relevant objects for stricter legislation than kosher slaughtering. Liberal Party representative Torjus Gard of Rogaland County declared that

as long as we tolerate and maintain the scientific animal cruelty known as vivisection, I think we also could tolerate kosher slaughtering for the time being. There is no logical consistency here, and I think we should sweep before our own door before we look to others.¹⁰⁴⁹

That Gard maintained the 'us' and 'them' of the opponents of kosher slaughtering highlights the somewhat hopeless position the proponents of shechita assumed. That Jews were not regarded as proper Norwegian citizens and defined as 'guests' was a premise that was even accepted indirectly by Mowinckel when he asked the MPs to 'look nearer home', or by Fjærli for that matter, when he characterised the question whether the Jews should be allowed to slaughter 200–300 animals a year as 'a small question compared to the question of improving the slaughter methods for *us Norwegians*'.¹⁰⁵⁰

However, another group of 'others' that to a greater extent than Jews was counted among 'Norwegians' in this debate, were the Sami reindeer herders of Northern Norway. Along with vivisection, their slaughter method was highlighted by proponents of an exemption clause as a far more urgent issue than kosher slaughtering. Fjærli characterised this as the 'most cruel of all slaughter methods in the world' [*sic*], because reindeer, after having been casted with the use of a lasso, were stabbed in the heart with a simple sheath knife and bled to death, 'fighting with death for about 8 minutes'. Regarding the time-limited (to five years) exemption clause for slaughtering of tame reindeer proposed by the Agricultural Committee majority, Fjærli declared that for him, it was 'impossible to take part in a slaughter law that exempts this slaughter method; I think it is primarily this gruesome slaughter method that should be the target of the slaughter law'. Fjærli added that he did not think there was any reason why the

¹⁰⁴⁹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 577.

¹⁰⁵⁰ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 560. My italics.

general requirement of previous stunning should not be implemented immediately among the Sami if the law was printed and explained both in Norwegian and Sami.¹⁰⁵¹

Also, Minister of Agriculture Hans Aarstad of the Liberal Party characterised reindeer slaughtering as the ‘most barbarous’, and found it ‘strange’ that the committee had opted for an exemption for reindeer slaughter. Aarstad regretted that he had not been involved in preparing the bill, and declared that if he had been, he would have opted for an exemption clause, but presumably only in order to allow shechita.¹⁰⁵² Finnmark MP Johan Martin Mjøen (1883–1966) of the Liberal Party confirmed Fjærli’s description of the reindeer slaughtering method,¹⁰⁵³ and proposed that the time-limited exemption be reduced from 5 to 3 years, a proposal that later was accepted unanimously.¹⁰⁵⁴ In effect, the county of Finnmark was exempted from the requirement of previous stunning until 1933. However, from April 19, 1937 up until this day, slaughtering of reindeer has been exempted from stunning regulations later promulgated by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry issued on January 24, 1930 instructions requiring livestock to be stunned by shooting or a blow, and prohibited the use of any other stunning devices, except for slaughtering of reindeer. Ever since, it has been allowed to stun reindeer through an incision with a special curved knife into the brain through the neck.¹⁰⁵⁵

However, reindeer slaughtering had not only critics – Svend Skaardal claimed that the method of reindeer slaughter he himself had witnessed in his home region was ‘recommendable’,¹⁰⁵⁶ while Sundby supported the time-limited exemption for the Sami, and applauded attempts already underway to improve the method.¹⁰⁵⁷ Although the Sami slaughter method also was condemned by most opponents of an exemption clause, critics such as Bærøe,¹⁰⁵⁸ Sundby, and Skaardal treated Sami reindeer herders with greater understanding and patience when they advocated an additional period of three years for improvement. With regard to shechita, however, the same MPs rejected a similar time-limited exemption period. The explanation for

¹⁰⁵¹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 563.

¹⁰⁵² *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 572.

¹⁰⁵³ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, pp. 575–576.

¹⁰⁵⁴ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 584.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Njaa 1953, pp. 94–101. Although the use of a knife as stunning device is highly controversial, this exemption still exists out of respect for the traditions of indigenous peoples, and is justified through the EU Council Directive 93/119/EC, article 1, No. 2 (Stenevik & Mejdell 2011, p. 144).

¹⁰⁵⁶ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 571.

¹⁰⁵⁷ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 578.

¹⁰⁵⁸ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 578.

the accommodating attitude and the lack of similar urgency with abolishing the reindeer slaughter method can hardly be found in the special status of the Sami as an indigenous people. This status was acknowledged over half a century later in 1990, and has relevance only for the exemption for knives as stunning devices in the current animal welfare legislation. In the 1920s, the Sami people were still regarded as a primitive, inferior people that had to be educated through the means of 'Norwegianisation' and consequently abandon their language and culture. The reason for the MPs' comparatively greater understanding of Sami reindeer slaughtering is twofold. Firstly, the Sami, despite their 'inferior' culture and habitudes, were still regarded as part of the nation, and were to an increasing extent subjected to measures of assimilation in order to become more like the majority population. Secondly, and perhaps as important, is the status of the animals in question. Few Norwegian-speaking inhabitants in the northernmost counties were reindeer herders, and the Peasant Party had little if no interest in the reindeer sector. The Peasant Party and its followers were far more concerned with farm animals, and repeatedly emphasised the close ties between the Norwegian farmer and his animals, as will be recalled from the press debates in 1927. This would also be the case in the 1929 parliamentary debate.

The Farmers and the Popular Opinion

As will be evident from the attitudes to Sami reindeer slaughtering, the issue was for Peasant Party MPs after all not primarily about animal welfare. Rather, it was about the status of Norwegian farmers, who should have the right to decide how their animals were treated, even after they had been sent to the slaughterhouse. As a response to the question of the scientific status of different slaughter methods, Jon Sundby stated that

Even if one assumes there are divided opinions from a strictly scientific view, it is in any case certain that it is the people's feelings and opinions that must be decisive. And in this case, one should have particular regard for the part of the people that has most to do with livestock, namely the farmers. The farmers love their animals, and just the thought that they eventually have to be slaughtered is painful.¹⁰⁵⁹

Sundby's fellow Peasant Party MP Olav Os continued in a similar vein:

¹⁰⁵⁹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 568.

the Jewish slaughter method offends the best and finest feelings among those of us who own livestock, who look after livestock and who love the animals. These feelings are religion for us, and nobody should find it unreasonable that we want to protect these.¹⁰⁶⁰

The emphasis on the incompatibility of kosher slaughtering with the sentiments of Norwegian farmers constitutes an interesting contradiction in the parlance of Peasant Party MPs. On one side, they claimed that the issue was not really about kosher slaughtering, and that this was a ‘subordinate question’ in the slaughter law.¹⁰⁶¹ On the other side, they claimed that inhumane slaughter methods, or any other form of animal cruelty, did not exist among Norwegian farmers.¹⁰⁶² However, the most interesting thing about the quotations above, is not only that the two Peasant Party MPs invoked notions of the special relationship between Norwegians and their animals, thus also strengthening notions of the special concern for animals among Norwegian farmers – they also touched upon the question of authority: who had the right to be heard in this question? Who did the issue concern? For Peasant Party MPs this was beyond doubt the farmers, whose opinions should be valued more highly than not only the Jewish community’s opinions, but also scientists’ opinions. The animal protectionists’ believe in ‘practitioners’ above scientists was given a new element when promoted by the Peasant Party. The farmers should be heard and respected not only because of their practical knowledge, but also because of their emotional ties to the animals.

However, the small Jewish community’s interests were put up against the interests of not only the Peasant Party’s main target group. The farmers were far from alone in their demand, according to Jon Sundby. They were supported by ‘a majority of the population’, and he claimed further that it was ‘exceedingly rare that the Odelsting has adopted a law that is supported by a stronger and more [*sic*] unanimous popular opinion than this’.¹⁰⁶³ Thus, the Peasant Party claimed to speak on behalf of not only the country’s farmers, but the entire population. Also, the Labour Party’s Svend Skaardal claimed to do this when he raised the question of whose interests should be given most attention: ‘those of the Mosaic Congregation or the Norwegian people’s, the Norwegian society’s, the inhabitants’

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 573.

¹⁰⁶¹ See Sundby above.

¹⁰⁶² See also Os p. 573 and Kolstad p. 579.

¹⁰⁶³ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, pp. 568–569. Sundby also used terms such as ‘strong popular opinion’ and ‘nearly unanimous popular opinion’ in his speech.

interests?’¹⁰⁶⁴ The answer was of course the latter, ‘who in thousands have petitioned the Odelsting and the Storting’, and who therefore deserved as much tolerance as the Jews, according to Skaardal.¹⁰⁶⁵ Thus, the question of minority rights and tolerance was turned upside down and applied to the majority! The notion of a ‘unanimous people’s opinion’ was challenged by Minister of Agriculture Hans Aarstad, who claimed that ‘certain organs have tried to make this into a unanimous demand, but if one speaks with people around the rural districts, you will not necessarily hear of any strong demand for this’.¹⁰⁶⁶

Fjærli’s initial wish for another postponement in order to consider whether slaughter regulations could be included in the coming animal protection law was supported explicitly by only two MPs (Støstad and Gard), who also stated that they would support an exemption clause.¹⁰⁶⁷ Since both Lykke and Tønder voiced their support for only the exemption clause,¹⁰⁶⁸ Fjærli abstained for proposing another postponement, and proposed instead to add an exemption clause identical to the one found in the Lykke Cabinet’s 1927 proposition, in order to avoid an ‘absolute prohibition of kosher slaughtering’.¹⁰⁶⁹ Fjærli also meant that pork-export interests could justify an exemption, and warned Peasant Party MPs against sacrificing potential incomes from pork export for the cause of prohibiting kosher slaughtering. By once more mentioning pork export, Fjærli most likely hoped to gain support of MPs from regions where this issue was relevant. Sundby rejected the notion that it was in the peasant population’s interest to allow the Danish-American slaughter method, since he knew that farmers did not care about prices when animal welfare was at stake: ‘I know Norwegian farmers who could have gained higher prices for both cattle and chickens if they were willing to sell their animals to kosher slaughtering, but they have refused’.¹⁰⁷⁰

The Final Vote

An overwhelming majority, 88 against 21 votes, rejected Fjærli’s proposal for an exemption for shechita.¹⁰⁷¹ There had been indications since the first postponement vote that there were

¹⁰⁶⁴ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 570.

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 579. Skaardal also mentioned the concern for the slaughterhouse workers, who in Sweden allegedly had refused to have anything to do with kosher slaughter (p. 571).

¹⁰⁶⁶ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 572.

¹⁰⁶⁷ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 577.

¹⁰⁶⁸ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 575 and p. 577.

¹⁰⁶⁹ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 582.

¹⁰⁷⁰ *Stortingsforhandlinger 1929. Ottende del. Forhandlinger i Odelstinget*, p. 583.

¹⁰⁷¹ Only three MPs were absent.

strong forces in the Odelsting working against an exemption for shechita. Ivar Lykke claimed already in April 1927 in a private letter to the Mosaic Congregation trustee that there was most likely a majority in the Odelsting willing to prohibit shechita.¹⁰⁷² However, until the final vote, most of the Liberal Party MPs, as well as a considerable part of the Labour Party group, had secured a majority for both postponements. When this did not occur in the final debate, there is of course a possibility that the MPs' patience now had been exhausted, or that they would have voted against the exemption clause had the bill itself been brought up in 1927 or 1928. Noteworthy also is that between the 1928 and 1929 meetings there had been a considerable change in the composition of MPs present. Of the 88 against the exemption, 30 MPs had not been present during the 1928 postponement debate.¹⁰⁷³ Among these were also many Labour Party MPs that had been absent during the 1928 postponement debate,¹⁰⁷⁴ MPs of the Buskerud, Hedmark, Oslo, and Telemark benches. All Labour Party MPs from these constituencies were now present and voted against the exemption. Still, 22 of those who had been present in 1928 and voted *for* the postponement, voted *against* the exemption in 1929. All these were either from the Labour Party or the Liberal Party.¹⁰⁷⁵ Only one representative voted the other way (T. P. Lund, Haakon Five's substitute MP).

Due to the overwhelming majority voting against the exemption (88 of 109), it makes less sense to conduct a similar survey of party affiliation and constituency as with the 1927 and 1928 postponement votes. Still, a look at party affiliation and geographical origin of the 21 MPs voting *for* the exemption confirms the pattern from previous votings: MPs from south-western and northern parts of the country, as well as a considerable part of city MPs, were less inclined to support a prohibition of shechita than East Country and Trøndelag MPs were. MPs from the south-west, north, and the larger cities had also voiced their opposition to a prohibition during the debate.¹⁰⁷⁶ In addition to those speaking from the rostrum, most of the

¹⁰⁷² See copy of letter dated 13.04.1927 from Ivar Lykke to Israel Gittelsen, in the Gunnerus Library, Special Collections, Private Archive of Ivar Lykke, No. 12:4.

¹⁰⁷³ Ytterstad, Fjalstad, A. Mjøen, Madsen, O. Johansen, H. Karlsen, J. Lothe, Steinnes, Grivi, Versto, Hundseid, Ferslew, Løhre, M. Johansen, Blakstad, Norem, Nordanger, Ameln, Færøvik, Hornsrud, J. Jensen, Saue, Nygaard, Abrahamsen, J. M. Mjøen, O. Nilssen, Sæter, Løfsgaard, Monsen, and J. Vik.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Hornsrud, Nygaard, O. Nilssen, Sæter, Monsen, Madsen, O. Johansen, H. Karlsen, Steinnes, Versto.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Gavlen, Kleppe, E. Aase, Hafnor, L. Hansen, A. J. Moen, J. Wiik, Skaardal, Mathiassen, Christiansen, H. O. Karlsen, Hjelmtveit, Udland, Tveteraas, O. J. Olsen, H. Halvorsen, Steen, Berg, Sjøli, Mannsaaker, Flem, and Alvestad.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Notably Hambro, Lykke and Støstad for the cities, and Fjærli, Gard, and Tønder for the western and northern counties, as well as the two cabinet members Mowinkel and Aarstad, who had no vote, but whose substitutes in the Storting (Seip and Gard) voted for the exemption.

‘silent’ MPs voting for an exemption in 1929 had also voted for the postponements in the previous years.¹⁰⁷⁷

Of city MPs, half of the Trondheim bench (Lykke and Støstad) supported the exemption, while only 1 of 3 Bergen MPs (Seip, Mowinckel’s substitute), and 1 of 4 on the Oslo bench (Hambro). Stronger support for Fjærli’s exemption clause was found in Troms County, where the entire Labour party faction,¹⁰⁷⁸ counting four of five MPs from this county, voted together with Tønder. In addition to Troms, there was also some support among MPs from Vest-Agder (2 of 5), Rogaland (2 of 6), Hordaland (2 of 6) – all but one from the Liberal Party.¹⁰⁷⁹ Of 22 Liberal Party MPs, a slight majority of 13 MPs voted for the exemption clause, and most of these had also voted for the 1927 and 1928 postponements.¹⁰⁸⁰ These were mostly representatives of the classical West Country Liberal Party, where education, prohibitionism, language, and Christian values were common factors. Many of these were also farmers, but mostly smallholders, in contrast to the freeholder dominance in the East Country Peasant Party. This geographical divide may also be explained by regional differences in slaughter practices, as traditional slaughter methods probably to a certain extent still were practiced in the West Country and in Northern Norway, where farms were smaller and distances greater. For slaughter purposes, sheep were also more common than cattle in these regions, which also contributed to more frequent home slaughtering. For instance, most cooperative slaughterhouses were in the East Country, while public slaughterhouses in the West Country and Northern Norway were limited to larger towns.¹⁰⁸¹ Thus, geographical conditions outside the East Country should also be taken into account when attempting to explain the preponderance of supporters of shechita among the south-western MPs, and to a certain extent, Northern Norway MPs.

Nor should the role of religion be underestimated as decisive for those favouring the exemption clause. The concentration of exemption supporters in the South-West

¹⁰⁷⁷ Eiesland (Liberal, Vest-Agder), Olsen-Hagen (Labour, Rogaland), Markhus (Liberal, Hordaland), Kårbø (Liberal, Hordaland) and Caroliussen (Liberal, Nordland) had voted for both postponements, while Pedersen (Liberal, Aust-Agder), E. Jørgensen (Liberal, Rogaland), Djupvik (Liberal, Nordland), A. Johansen (Labour, Troms) and Hagb. Lund (Liberal, Finnmark) had voted for the 1928 postponement (all were elected in 1927).

¹⁰⁷⁸ Vangberg, Foshaug, A. Johansen, and Tønder.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Vest-Agder: Eiesland and E. Jørgensen; Rogaland: Gard and Olsen-Hagen (Labour); Hordland: Markhus and Kårbø.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Eiesland, Olsen-Hagen, Markhus, Kårbø, Fjærli, and Caroliussen had voted for both postponements, while Djupvik, H. Lund, Gard, Pedersen, E. Jørgensen, and Seip had voted for the 1928 postponement. Only T. P. Lund had changed sides, while Leinum had not been present during either of the postponement debates.

¹⁰⁸¹ Holmgren 1981.

constituencies should not be attributed to their membership in the Liberal Party alone – there were several Liberal MPs that voted *against* the exemption clause, but few of these came from the Vest-Agder and Rogaland constituencies, where the pietistic, low-church movement was especially strong in Liberal Party circles. Although little is known of the religious convictions of Liberal Party MPs from the South-West, they could not avoid taking the religious aspect into consideration, given the Liberal Party's electoral basis in these regions. Here, the concern and support for the Jewish people has remained the greatest – in our day usually as support for the state of Israel. A notable exception here is Liberal MP Rasmus Tveteraas of Rogaland, who eventually voted against the exemption, but whose contribution to the 1928 postponement debate illustrates the Jewish people's special status among much of the electorate in the south-west. Although the clergyman and Labour Party MP Kristian Tønder of Troms argued more in terms of a secular understanding of religious freedom than in terms of the Jewish people's special status, his support for allowing kosher slaughtering should also be read in a religious context, and constitutes an important exception within the Labour Party, since he was able to gain the support of all his fellow Labour MPs from Troms.

With regard to the great majority that voted *against* the exemption clause, there are aspects of the 1929 Odelsting debate suggesting why some of the MPs hitherto reluctant to adopt a law prohibiting kosher slaughtering could have changed their minds. Since a majority of those who voted against an exemption remained silent during negotiations, an explanation of their motives must to a greater extent than with the minority be based on speculation. However, there are certain themes in the debates that stand out. One of these is the attitudes towards foreigners and immigration, which to a much greater degree were present in the final debate than in the postponement debates. Although Olav Rovde has demonstrated that belief in racial theories was especially strong in the Peasant Party, he admits that similar notions also existed within other parties. He also points out the strikingly broad political consensus for restricting immigration policy in the 1920s and 1930s, as well as new discriminatory legislation aimed at assimilating the Traveller, Sami, and Kven minorities.¹⁰⁸²

Further, there was a widespread fear in the 1930s among politicians from most parties of letting Jews into the country, either because of the danger Jews allegedly constituted for the population's racial purity, or because of fear of creating a 'Jewish problem' in a country that

¹⁰⁸² Rovde 1997, p. 328 and p. 333. See also the quotations in Kolsrud 1990, p. 12f.

so far had been spared ‘racial conflicts’.¹⁰⁸³ A prohibition of shechita might have been perceived as a measure for limiting the influx of Jews into the country, and for making the country less attractive for Jewish immigrants. Hundseid’s statement ‘we have not invited the Jews to this country’ should be read as demanding further limits on immigration of Jews. Several other speakers mentioned that one could not let concern for Jews be decisive, since Jews in the first place were regarded as ‘guests’ in the country. The majority’s endorsement of Hundseid’s anti-immigration rhetoric does not necessarily mean that the Odelsting majority shared Hundseid’s racist convictions, but as historian Odd Bjørn Fure has shown, there was a broad consensus among the parties for a stricter immigration policy as a means to protect the labour market.¹⁰⁸⁴ Fure also mentions the need for strengthening the nation’s cultural distinctiveness in the wake of societal fragmentation caused by the First World War, and that these processes affected attitudes not only towards immigrants, but also towards national minorities such as the Kvens and Sami.¹⁰⁸⁵ Per Ole Johansen draws a parallel between what he refers to as the ‘crusade against kosher slaughter’ and other contemporary ‘crusades’, such as the ‘Norwegianisation’ of Finnmark, in the sense that both were characterised by a strong opposition between ‘us’ and ‘them’.¹⁰⁸⁶ However, the parliamentary debate in 1929 shows that there was a clear distinction between the Sami and the Jews, and that these groups cannot as easily be defined within the same category of ‘others’ as Johansen wants. Whereas the Sami became subject to assimilation, clearly regarded as capable of becoming ‘Norwegians’, Jews, despite most of them being Norwegian citizens, could never become ‘real’ Norwegians in the same sense.

Conclusion

Although it is difficult to say anything decisive about the motives of the ‘silent majority’ of the 88 MPs voting against the exemption for shechita in the new slaughter law, there were certain arguments raised during the debate that seemingly influenced the outcome of the debate, while other arguments had little effect on the majority. When not only looking at the great majority, but also taking the minority’s party affiliations and their home constituencies into account, it is possible to evaluate the impact of various arguments raised during debate, both pro and contra. The arguments of religious freedom do not seem to have had much effect

¹⁰⁸³ Rovde 1997, p. 328.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Fure 1996, p. 48.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Fure 1996, pp. 51–52.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Johansen 1984, p. 72.

on MPs, perhaps with the exception of some of the more cosmopolitan-minded city constituency MPs, as well as Liberal MPs of the south-west constituencies and the Troms Labour MPs. On the other hand, the great majority of MPs seem to have accepted the notion put forward by the Peasant Party that the question had nothing to do with religious freedom or minority rights at all, or Labour Party MP Skaardal's claim that it was the majority's religious notions that should be 'tolerated' at the minority's expense.

The support for this argument must be viewed in connection with the status of the minority in question. While the needs of Sami reindeer herders were met with understanding such that they were granted three more years to improve the reindeer slaughter method, the majority did not express any similar patience with the Jewish slaughter method. On the contrary, this method was perceived as something foreign, 'inappropriate' in a country where farmers supposedly had extraordinarily close ties to their animals, preventing them from doing anything harmful to animals. The Jews, on the other hand, were described as fanatic in their religious convictions, performing 'religious orgies' with 'our animals'. As we have seen from the previous chapters, even from the early 1900s, the ritual aspect of kosher slaughtering was used to discredit the practice. The animal protection movement's and the peasant movement's agitation had gained the discursive hegemony to such an extent that hardly anyone doubted accusations about the intentionally cruel 'ritual'. For those having doubts about the alleged cruelty, the possible dissuasive effect a prohibition would have on unwanted Jewish immigration may have contributed to make these MPs vote against an exemption anyway.

Part 5: Aftermath and Concluding Remarks

5.1: Aftermath

For Norwegian Jews, the prohibition on religious slaughter has been perceived as a major obstacle for observing dietary rules. Importing kosher meat has posed a number of problems for the Jewish minority, both practical and economical. More importantly, the prohibition has been viewed as a discriminatory measure in itself, and the debate concerning the issue has been regarded a low point in relations to the majority population prior to the war. Little is known of the prohibition's immediate consequences for religious observance, but there is reason to believe that in the long term, difficulties in obtaining kosher meat must have affected compliance of dietary laws for many, thus accentuating secularisation. The prohibition's implications for contemporary Norwegian-Jewish identities are to some extent treated in Jon Graawe Forland's master's thesis from 2009, but no historical research has addressed the consequences of the prohibition.

Although examining the prohibition's consequences is beyond the scope of this thesis, it would be relevant to briefly look into how the prohibition was perceived in the immediate aftermath. This reveals not only persisting tensions between the Jewish community and the authorities, but also tensions within the Jewish community. In December 1929, the Mosaic Congregation in Oslo received special permission from the Ministry of Agriculture to import fresh meat in smaller parts than whole carcasses from Stockholm public slaughterhouse. Shortly after the prohibition entered force on January 1, 1930, the Israelite Congregation, the other Jewish religious congregation in Oslo, commenced to import meat from a butchery near Kornsjø across the border in Sweden, not far from Halden in Østfold County. Since the Israelite Congregation imported whole carcasses, the congregation was not obliged to apply for special permission.¹⁰⁸⁷ However, already in February 1930, the new butchery created 'controversy and indignation' among the Østfold population since meat 'discarded' by the Jews (i.e. the backpart) was sold to Norwegians in Halden. As a consequence, the butchery's manager was reported to Swedish police for animal cruelty and for not having applied for

¹⁰⁸⁷ Memorandum dated 13.07.1932 in The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærdirektoratet/ Veterinæravdelingen. Saksarkiv 1826-1983. Avlivning av husdyr og tamrein. Div. mapper. Schächting.

work permits for the Kristiania Mosaic Congregation's 'priest' (i.e. the shochet).¹⁰⁸⁸ Also the Trondheim Mosaic Congregation experienced difficulties with import restrictions in this period, and the Ministry of Agriculture expressed frustration for having to deal with three different Jewish religious congregations importing from three different locations.¹⁰⁸⁹ On the top of this, the Kristiania Mosaic Congregation and the Israelite Congregation were constantly in conflict throughout the 1930s over prices and religious regulations.¹⁰⁹⁰ The conflict reached its climax in 1937, when the Israelite Congregation's *katzef* (meat seller) was arrested for having sabotaged the Mosaic Congregation's meat imports.¹⁰⁹¹

Apart from covering these incidents, Norwegian press seemingly devoted little attention to kosher slaughtering after the prohibition entered force.¹⁰⁹² However, a piece in *Aftenposten* in 1933 is worth mentioning in order to illustrate how shechita was still perceived in Norway's largest paper in the 1930s. Under the headline 'Hitler creates order in Germany', the paper highlighted as a positive aspect of Hitler's *Machtergreifung* that SA troops had 'prohibited' shechita and 'confiscated knives necessary for kosher slaughtering' at a slaughterhouse in Cologne.¹⁰⁹³ Moreover, a highly anti-Semitic letter to *Aftenposten* in late March 1933 echoed writings in the same paper a few years earlier. By pointing to kosher slaughtering, the submitter attempted to relativise persecution of Jews under the new regime in Germany: 'As a Germanic and a Christian [...] I, and many with me, are more severely affected [than Jews in Germany] by the thought of our domestic animals' sufferings caused by Jewish slaughter methods'.¹⁰⁹⁴

Although authorities appeared as relatively accommodating towards Jewish requests for import permissions, they seem to have been less enthusiastic to finding a way for Jews to lawfully practice shechita in Norway. In 1932, Trondheim city veterinary and slaughterhouse manager Edvin Laukvik inquired to the Ministry of Agriculture about giving the city's Jewish

¹⁰⁸⁸ 'Schächtningsanstalten ved grensen' in *Aftenposten*, 14.02.1930; 'Hvordan schächtningforbudet omgås' in *Aftenposten*, 16.05.1930.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Memorandum dated 13.07.1932 in The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærdirektoratet/ Veterinæravdelingen. Saksarkiv 1826-1983. Avlivning av husdyr og tamrein. Div. mapper. Schächtning.

¹⁰⁹⁰ For the religious conflicts, see esp. letter from Rabbi Sch. I. Lewitan dated 27.03.1930 and letter from Rabbi Ch. O. Grodzienski, Vilnius, dated 18.03.1930. The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærdirektoratet/Veterinæravdelingen. Saksarkiv 1826-1983. Avlivning av husdyr og tamrein. Div. mapper. Schächtning.

¹⁰⁹¹ 'Schächtekjøttet til det mosaiske trossamfund blev ødelagt med parafin' in *Aftenposten*, 24.09.1937.

¹⁰⁹² An exception to this may be found in *Halden Arbeiderblad* in February and March 1936.

¹⁰⁹³ 'Hitler skaper ro i Tyskland' in *Aftenposten*, 14.03.1933.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Tannlæge Frost: 'Et svar til rabbiner Samuel' in *Aftenposten*, 30.03.1933. See also letters on 01.04.1933.

community permission to slaughter chickens at a poultry slaughterhouse (Trondheim Eggcentral), using a combination of shechita and the stunning method (the chicken's neck was cut by the shochet, followed immediately by beheading). Laukvik's inquiry was, however, promptly dismissed by the head of the Ministry of Agriculture's Veterinary Authority, Niels Thorshaug, with reference to the 1929 slaughter law's unconditional requirement of previous stunning.¹⁰⁹⁵ Furthermore, after the Swedish Riksdag adopted a prohibition on non-stunning slaughter methods in 1937, the Oslo Mosaic Congregation accepted the compromise reached in Sweden between veterinary authorities and the Jewish community, namely to anaesthetise animals with nitrous oxide.¹⁰⁹⁶ When meat imports from Sweden temporarily were prohibited in 1938 due to outbreak of foot-and-mouth-disease, the Mosaic Congregation attempted to introduce the Swedish method in Norway. However, the Ministry of Agriculture again refused to accept a compromise suggested by the Jewish community, this time mainly because of how animals were treated prior to anaesthetisation.¹⁰⁹⁷ Instead, Norwegian Jews commenced to import meat from Finland.¹⁰⁹⁸

Regarding Jewish reactions beyond the official measures to supply the community with meat, there are few public testimonies. Mendelsohn writes that a solemn mourning service was held in the Trondheim Mosaic Congregation on January 1, 1930,¹⁰⁹⁹ but little is known about how individual Jews perceived the prohibition. Some indications may nevertheless be found in memoir and fiction literature by Jewish authors writing about the interwar period. For instance, the ballet dancer Tutte Lemkow writes in his memoirs about a traumatic episode from his school years. During a lecture on animal cruelty, his science teacher approached him at his desk, stating loudly before the class that 'There is a race of people which slaughter cattle in a brutal way'.¹¹⁰⁰ When the fiction author Eva Scheer's character Chaie in the novel *Vi bygger i sand* ('We are building with sand') hesitates to commence a meal at a farm owned

¹⁰⁹⁵ The National Archives, Ministry of Agriculture, Veterinærkontoret/-direktoratet. D: Saksarkiv, No. 103.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Memorandum dated 04.02.1939. The gas method is described in a memorandum by A. V. Sahlsted and Oscar Brandt, dated Stockholm 27.06.1928. The Ministry of agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærdirektoratet/ Veterinæravdelingen. Saksarkiv 1826-1983. Avlivning av husdyr og tamrein. Div. mapper. Schächtning.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Undated report on demonstrations of shechita at the Malmö and Copenhagen public slaughterhouses. The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærdirektoratet/Veterinæravdelingen. Saksarkiv 1826-1983. Avlivning av husdyr og tamrein. Div. mapper. Schächtning.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Draft for a letter to the Isralite Congregation, 17.06.1938. The Ministry of Agriculture [Landbruksdepartementet]: Veterinærdirektoratet/Veterinæravdelingen. Saksarkiv 1826-1983. Avlivning av husdyr og tamrein. Div. mapper. Schächtning.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Mendelsohn 1969, p. 583.

¹¹⁰⁰ Lemkow 1989, p. 87. See also p. 108f. for another episode addressing the issue of kashrut.

by gentiles, she is assured by the host that ‘We have tormented the goose to death, exactly like you [Jews] usually do’.¹¹⁰¹ Moreover, the conservative politician and former president of the Storting, Jo Benkow, mentions in his memoirs some of the problems the prohibition posed for his family, remarking sarcastically that the prohibition made ‘many Norwegian Jews into passionate fish-eaters’,¹¹⁰² while the pianist Robert Levin described in his memoirs how the prohibition made daily life more difficult, especially for the poorer Jews.¹¹⁰³ There are more examples in these books, and the recurring presence of this theme suggests that the kosher slaughter prohibition occupied the minds of many Norwegian Jews in the interwar years and beyond.

5.2: Concluding Remarks

A recurring theme in this thesis has been the 1929 slaughter law’s explicit intention to prohibit shechita. Although kosher slaughtering is not explicitly mentioned in the legal text, there should be little doubt that the Jewish slaughter method was the legislation’s primary target. Initial demands for slaughter reform in the 1880s did not address the Jewish slaughter method; however, from the 1890s, slaughter reform was increasingly turned into an issue primarily concerning kosher slaughtering. The reasons for the Norwegian animal protection movement’s preoccupation with shechita are described in chapter 3.1, and can be briefly summed up as being a result of conflicting notions of Nordic animal friendliness and the grim reality found in traditional slaughter methods still practiced around the country by the turn of the century. Thus became the need of targeting a ‘foreign’ practice even greater in Norway than in Denmark, where the Danish-American slaughter method played a similar role as shechita in Norwegian animal protection discourse. Much because of the comparatively high status of Danish Jewry, kosher slaughtering was ruled out as a constitutive counter image in the Danish movement. The vulnerable position of Norwegian Jews, on the other hand, made kosher slaughtering an easy target for Norwegian animal protectionists in the slaughter reform struggle. By looking at discursive images of other forms of ‘foreign’ animal cruelty, especially in Catholic, Mediterranean countries, the hypothesis of shechita’s constitutive role in Norwegian animal protection discourse is strengthened.

¹¹⁰¹ Scheer 1948, p. 180 and p. 177f. Scheer also addressed the prohibition, see p. 224ff. Another literary description of the problems related to observance of kashrut may be found in Dickman 1946, p. 25f.

¹¹⁰² Benkow 1985, p. 68. See also p. 39, p. 52ff. and p. 56ff. for issues concerning compliance to kashrut.

¹¹⁰³ Levin 1983, p. 38.

With the resurgence of popular grass-roots movements in the Liberal Party state, politicians and authorities became increasingly attentive to the animal protection movement's demands. This was the case not only in the vivisection issue, as Kristin Asdal has shown, but also in the kosher slaughtering issue. While Asdal points out that in the vivisection issue, lay opinions attempted to get access to the 'laboratory', a domain previously limited to experts,¹¹⁰⁴ one may describe a similar development in the kosher slaughter affair. Here, lay opinions were granted access to the slaughterhouse and influence over its regulation. While this sphere originally had been restricted to veterinary experts and butchers, the animal protection movement gained access, not necessarily physically, to these domains on the cost of the former groups. The reason for butchers' turning against shechita may be found in changes in the butcher profession implied by slaughterhouse reform. As Noëlie Vialles has described, the institutionalisation of public slaughterhouses also affects butchers' self-understanding. With the Jewish shochet's maintaining an ancient slaughter method, kosher slaughtering was perceived as a barbaric, uncivilised method, unsuitable in a modern slaughterhouse. Thus, with politicians granting animal protectionists influence over slaughterhouse policies, and the butchers' protesting to the presence of kosher slaughtering, the anti-shechita agitation was manifested in the 1913 exclusion of shechita from the Kristiania slaughterhouse.

However, the animal protection movement's agitation in 1913 was reinforced by anti-Jewish attacks in the press, affecting in turn the animal protection movement's parlance. From rejecting shechita, though being ambiguous towards Jews as such, animal protectionists increasingly used anti-Semitic images and stereotypes borrowed from contemporary anti-Semitic currents. Most prominently among these, the agrarian nationalist peasant movement's agitation. Inversely, the animal protection movement's contrasting of shechita and Jewish animal cruelty with notions of Nordic people's noble attitudes towards animals appealed to the peasant movement, and easily found its place in the latter movement's emerging exclusionary nationalist discourse.

The kosher slaughter controversy in Kristiania and Aker in 1913 and 1914 also triggered the police to take action against the Jewish community. Increasingly identifying Eastern European Jewish immigrants as threats to public morality, comparable to that of Travellers, Gypsies and other vagrants, Aker Police initiated criminal proceedings against the Mosaic

¹¹⁰⁴ Asdal 2006b; Asdal 2008.

Congregation's trustee for violation of the penal code's animal cruelty paragraph. However, with scientific authority still maintaining its primacy in the court room, this initiative was doomed to fail without any proper legislation. Thus, police and prosecuting authorities took the first initiatives to what later became the 1929 slaughter law. The initial failure of this strategy must mainly be attributed to the person of Ole Malm. After Malm's death in 1917 and Haakon Five's ascendancy as the country's leading agricultural politician a few years later, there was little obstructing judicial authorities' and animal protectionists' persisting initiatives to prohibit kosher slaughtering. It should be emphasised once more that the Veterinary Authority's slaughter ordinance drafts not containing an unconditional prohibition on non-stunning methods were unsatisfying for Five exactly because an exemption from the requirement of previous stunning would enable shechita. Five's insisting of prohibiting shechita was also the reason why a majority of Five's cabinet colleagues in 1925/1926, including Prime Minister Mowinckel, were sceptical to Five's ordinance, and consequently wanted to have the issue further examined to avoid committing injustices against the Jewish minority. The same attitude was found within a majority of the subsequent cabinet of conservative Ivar Lykke. Despite cabinet opposition, the increasing public opinion inevitably made the Storting request the government to propose a bill on slaughtering in 1926.

Once in the hands of the elected members of the Storting, the issue did not only allow clearly anti-Semitic sentiments among Peasant Party politicians to shine through. The issue was also cynically used by peasant movement and labour movement press in a smear campaign against Prime Minister Ivar Lykke and the hegemonic centre-right parties. Although hardly a sufficient explanation, this exploitation of the issue contributed to reinforce the negative discourse around kosher slaughtering, making it Norway's most extensive anti-Semitic 'affair' prior to World War II. The 1926–1927 debates allowed various individuals and groups to position themselves against Jews. In addition to police superstition against Jews, and to the peasant movement's increasingly isolationist and paranoiac attitudes to the world beyond Norway's border, the affair also gave clergymen the opportunity to unleash old hatreds, and countercultural activists were able to enhance images of Norwegian culture's superiority over foreign influences.

Apart from debates in the capital press, the affair's geographical concentration in certain regions, together with MPs' voting behaviour in the three consecutive parliamentary debates,

suggest that the issue especially created distress in the East Country and Trøndelag. The great indignation kosher slaughtering caused in these regions may have reflected existing attitudes towards Jews. In any case, the population in these regions must have been more receptive to negative agitation against kosher slaughtering than the population in Northern and Western Norway. Other scholars have indicated that the Peasant Party's anti-Semitic agitation also beyond the kosher slaughtering controversy achieved much resonance in these regions.¹¹⁰⁵ However, the role of anti-Semitism in local press cannot be positively determined out from one case, but further research may give answers. Noteworthy is, however, that MPs from these regions were the most active in parliamentary debates on kosher slaughtering, while supporters were either city MPs, westerners or northerners. Despite disagreements about whether kosher slaughtering should be forbidden, most MPs agreed on one thing, namely that the slaughter bill primarily was a means to prohibit kosher slaughtering. This was the reason why three consecutive cabinets attempted to halt the bill, why a majority of two Odelsting sessions had attempted the same thing, and why the Peasant Party made the slaughter bill a campaign issue in the 1927 elections. This is also why the slaughter bill was never referred to as the 'slaughter bill', but as the 'schächtning-affair'.

Norwegian Particularities

Although the first initiatives to the slaughter bill derived from the struggle against the Jewish slaughter method, and although many contemporaries perceived the law as a measure against kosher slaughtering, not all proponents of the law were necessarily motivated by hatred of Jews. In this sense, Norway fits into the pattern that scholars have observed from other European slaughter reform debates. Like in Germany, the Norwegian slaughter bill's rationale derived from an animal protection discourse, a public health discourse and a chauvinist, anti-Semitic discourse. These were of course not discrete phenomena. For instance, the anti-Semitic slaughter reform discourse overlapped with the two former in the sense that anti-Semites tended to regard shechita and Jewish ritual practice generally as problems of hygiene, among other things.

Nevertheless, in Norway, this latter aspect was absent, and constitutes an interesting deviation from the European debates. Hygiene was never highlighted as a problem with shechita by health authorities and veterinary experts, and curiously not used in the anti-Semitic agitation.

¹¹⁰⁵ Simonsen 2012.

What opponents frequently referred to, on the other hand, was Jews' exceptionally brutal behaviour towards animals. Interestingly, in Norway, these images first appeared in the animal protection discourse, and shows how animal protectionists borrowed images from the chauvinist discourse without necessarily having an anti-Semitic agenda in the first place. Anti-Semitic sentiments in the animal protection movement arrived only as the movement came in conflict with proponents of the third rationale for a slaughter bill. Veterinary authorities were primarily concerned with improving public health through fighting the spread of contagious diseases from animals to humans. This had been the rationale behind the 1892 slaughterhouse law, and when additional regulations of slaughter methods were drafted, the veterinary authorities had few scruples with allowing the Jewish slaughter method also under the new law.

Although the Ministry of Agriculture's veterinary expert officials eventually were overruled by the zealous head of ministry, Haakon Five, the latter's Liberal Party cabinet colleagues prevented anti-shechita legislation from entering into force in December 1925. The same happened in the successive Conservative and Liberal cabinets. In this sense, the development in Norway resembles both that in Switzerland and that in Imperial Germany: out from concerns of minority rights and religious freedom, conservative and liberal political elites attempted to halt slaughter legislation that would make previous stunning mandatory. In Switzerland, a plebiscite effectively ended all elite opposition, while in the German *Schächtfrage*, conservative, liberal, socialist and Catholic centre opposition prevented any success on behalf of the anti-Semitic parties.

While Switzerland's distinct political system contributed to facilitate a prohibition of kosher slaughter, certain similar features in Norwegian political culture made political elite opposition futile also in Norway. Norway's path from elite rule during most of the 19th century to parliamentary democracy under the Liberal Party state from the late 1900s also implied increasing influence of various countercultural projects. In spheres where traditional elites were still hegemonic due to expert authority, also this authority was increasingly questioned from the turn of the century. Most prominently, Kristin Asdal has pointed out how the preparatory penal code commission yielded to animal protection demands of lay monitoring of animal experimentation. After a lengthy debate in the Storting, objections raised by conservative MPs seemingly prevented the animal protection claims to take

precedence.¹¹⁰⁶ Some 15 years later, when animal protection demands again stood against veterinary expertise, the former succeeded. That most of the Liberal Party MPs opposed the law, may seem surprising given that it was the Liberal Party that in the first place had nourished the acceptance of lay opinions on the cost of traditional educational elites. However, the connection between the Liberal Party and grass-roots movement such as the animal protection movement should not be overemphasised. Rather, it was the Liberal Party's countercultural legacy in religious questions that made a majority of Liberal MPs to opt for the two postponements, and ultimately a large minority of Liberal MPs to opt for the exemption in 1929. In this sense, the Liberal Party played a similar as did the Catholic Centre Party in the German controversies.¹¹⁰⁷

While increasing grass-roots participation in political life mainly had positive effects in Norway – perhaps contrary to Germany – there is need to address negative aspects of increased popular participation under the Liberal Party state. Historian Rune Slagstad has claimed that contrary to Germany, where the phenomenon of *Volkstum* contributed to the establishment of the dictatorship, the Norwegian notion of *folkelighet* contributed to the expansion of democracy and popular participation.¹¹⁰⁸ While this is true, the prohibition of shechita shows that the influence of popular movements in politics also has led to restricting the religious freedom of a vulnerable minority. Interestingly, in Germany's case, it was not until Hitler came to power that a similar anti-shechita law was introduced on a national level, even though the issue had been raised a number of times in the *Reichstag* since the 1880s. However, as mentioned, in Germany, it was the hegemony of the traditional conservative and liberal elites, as well as the Catholic Centre Party that prevented a national prohibition of shechita.¹¹⁰⁹

'Cautious Integration' Failed?

Historian Marta Gjernes has characterised the Norwegian Jewish minority's encounter with the majority as a strategy of 'cautious integration'. Rather than assimilation, Jews in Norway attempted to integrate by the means of education and 'bourgeoisie ideals'. The Jewish community sought to turn the attention away from anti-Semitic stigmatisation through

¹¹⁰⁶ Asdal 2006b.

¹¹⁰⁷ Brantz 2002; Judd 2003a; Judd 2007.

¹¹⁰⁸ Slagstad 1998, p. 130.

¹¹⁰⁹ Brantz 2002, p. 185ff. and Judd 2007.

positive means and appear as useful citizens and ‘successful Norwegian Jews’.¹¹¹⁰ Also Vibeke Kieding Banik has observed similar tendencies in her study of Zionism among Norwegian Jews in the interwar period. The Jews were primarily concerned with becoming ‘Norwegian Jews’ and Zionism was only a secondary concern.¹¹¹¹ As a consequence of this integration strategies, anti-Semitic stigmatisation was often met with cautious responses. Although official representatives responded publicly to several attacks before and after World War I, the main strategy was to remain ‘cautious in our behaviour’, as a submitter to the Jewish magazine *Israeliten* formulated it in 1916.¹¹¹²

These strategies seemingly also applied to the kosher slaughtering affair. Harry Koritzinsky’s book from 1922 is an illustrating example of how Norwegian Jews reacted to anti-shechita agitation. Koritzinsky rejected the agitation simply by referring to it as a ‘germ of anti-Semitism’, that incidentally had not been very successful. When Koritzinsky wrote his book, the animal protection movement had already succeeded in persuading Kristiania City Council to introduce a local ban, while the prosecuting authorities had taken the first initiatives to establish a national prohibition. Whether this latter aspect was known to Koritzinsky should be unsaid, but by not addressing the Kristiania ban, Koritzinsky seemingly attempted to trivialise the entire affair. Similarly, the almost complete lack of Jewish voices in the 1913-1914 press debates in Kristiania, is striking. The only exception was a Jewish private individual, Josef Siew, while the Jewish congregations’ official representatives remained silent in public debate. Despite low-key opposition to initiatives to prohibit shechita, the Mosaic Congregation’s trustee Axel Grün was charged with accusations of animal cruelty. In the complex circumstances surrounding this case, opinions of veterinaries, lawyers, animal protectionists, police and prosecutors are known, but Grün’s own account of the events remains unknown.

Perhaps was Grün’s acquittal regarded as a proof of the cautious strategy’s success. However, the opposite reaction among Trondheim Jews in 1919 shows that the Kristiania Jews’ strategy not was the only option. In the 1919 debate, both official representatives of the Trondheim Mosaic Congregation and Jewish private individuals participated vigorously. Their participation and the local authorities’ rejection of excluding kosher slaughtering from the

¹¹¹⁰ Gjernes 2007, p. 233.

¹¹¹¹ Banik 2007, p. 191 and p. 209ff.

¹¹¹² Gjernes 2007, p. 178.

new slaughterhouse may also suggest that Trondheim Jews to a greater extent than Kristiania Jews were perceived as integrated citizens. Regardless of this, Kristiania Jews' cautious strategy appear not to have been as cautious among Trondheim Jews. Confident public protests among the latter seemingly benefited the members Trondheim Mosaic Congregation. A look to Denmark may also contribute to complete the picture of Jewish integration in Norway. In Denmark, where Jews had been living for centuries, the kosher slaughtering debates never evolved into anti-Semitic rhetoric, at least not within the Danish animal protection movement. On the contrary, Jews even participated in internal debates in animal protection magazines. This was of course related to the societal position of Danish Jewry. With a well-integrated Jewish elite, belonging to the same social strata as most animal protectionists, Jews in Denmark were a less obvious target than the majority of relatively newly immigrated, Eastern European Jews in Norway.

Norwegian Anti-Semitism – a Marginal Phenomenon?

Given the comparatively low social status of Jews in Norway, it is perhaps surprising that Norwegian Jews in the kosher slaughtering issue were accused of attempting to gain legal privileges or to manipulate the outcome of a democratic process. However, this contradiction only illustrate how previous anti-Semitic agitation could be turned into anti-shechita agitation, and inversely how kosher slaughtering became a favourite subject in anti-Semitic agitation, whether by individuals such as Saxlund, or in the peasant movement press. In this sense, the anti-Semitic agitation against kosher slaughtering fits into some historians' characterisation of Norwegian anti-Semitism prior to the Second World War as 'situational' and contingent.¹¹¹³

However, there is reason to question whether Norwegian anti-Semitism was primarily directed towards *external* images, as has also been claimed.¹¹¹⁴ The kosher slaughtering controversy shows that the anti-Semitic agitation was just as much directed towards the country's own Jewish community, albeit there were few other instances where the Norwegian Jewish minority was attacked prior to the Second World War. Still, the extent of the affair, counting at least four intensive phases of attacks in the press from 1913 until 1929, should qualify the controversy as a fairly large part of the total amount anti-Semitic rhetoric in Norwegian public in the interwar years. Considering the amount of press coverage together with three consecutive parliamentary debates, the controversy must have influenced the

¹¹¹³ Emberland 2005, p. 401, Lorenz 2011a, p. 36.

¹¹¹⁴ Emberland 2005, p. 401f.

everyday life of Norwegian Jews significantly. Inversely, the affair must also have contributed to form the majority's perceptions of Jews in general and Norwegian Jews in particular. An indication of this may be found in the increasing opposition against kosher slaughtering in various spheres of society where anti-Semitism has previously not been known to have had favourable conditions. Most prominently in this respect, some of the labour movement press' embracement of the peasant movement's anti-shechita agitation, but also among authors such as Hulda Garborg, Ingeborg Møller and Olaf Benneche, or in theosophist and anthroposophist circles. In this sense, opposition to kosher slaughtering may be characterised as a 'cultural code', in the manner Robin Judd has used the term originally coined by Shulamit Volkov in the German context.¹¹¹⁵

Whereas Judd points out the cultural code of anti-shechita agitation being mirrored in a cultural code of *support* for Jews and religious freedom, this was to a lesser extent present in Norway. Apart from Jewish voices, relatively few politicians and other public figures defended the right to practice shechita. Support for shechita was mainly found among scholars and scientists, whether it was the historian of religion Wilhelm Schencke or veterinaries such as Ole Malm and Olav Skar. Still, there existed support based on notions of religious freedom, especially among MPs speaking from a Christian perspective during the Odelsting debates in 1927, 1928 and 1929. The failure of these arguments suggests that notions of religious freedom found relatively little resonance, both in the Storting and in the general public. Correspondingly, the 'cultural code' of opposition to shechita found more resonance. The weak position of religious freedom in Norwegian political discourse is further highlighted in debates over the constitutional prohibition of the entry of Jesuits and monastic orders into the realm in 1925 and later in the 1950s.¹¹¹⁶

When acknowledging the religious freedom argument's weakness, there is much suggesting that the increasingly negative discourse on immigration contributed to introduce a law which effectively limited the religious practice of Norwegian Jews. Arguments emphasising the Jews' 'otherness' entirely dominated parliamentary debates. Thus, notions about Jewish 'rituals' incompatibility with Norwegian 'sentiments' and 'religious feelings' was transformed to apply on Jews as such. Jews were not only regarded as unwelcome 'others'. Jewish ritual practices were regarded the ultimate opposition to Nordic instincts towards

¹¹¹⁵ Judd 2007, p. 153; Volkov 1978.

¹¹¹⁶ See Sverdrup-Thygeson 2009, p. 54ff. See also Furre 2002.

animals, and became ‘symbols of a moral or metaphysical opposition, the “ritual” versus the “humane”’.¹¹¹⁷ The MPs’ attitudes to the Sami slaughter method may serve to illustrate this point. The Sami, an ethnic minority who has been subjected to a range of discriminatory measures during the last century, were in 1929 allowed – and are still allowed – to practice a slaughter method which was highly controversial already in the 1920s. In light of the exemption of this method, the Odelsting majority’s urgency to prohibit shechita suggests that kosher slaughtering was not regarded as just any slaughter method or perceived as one of many problems involving animal cruelty. Furthermore, the diverging attitudes to Jewish and Sami slaughter practices suggest that while the Sami may have been regarded the ‘constitutive other’,¹¹¹⁸ the anti-Semitic images in this conflict contributed to define the Jews as the ultimate other, or the ‘third’, as Klaus Holz has defined it.¹¹¹⁹ This hypothesis is also supported in some of the scholarly literature on anti-Semitism in the peasant movement,¹¹²⁰ however, the kosher slaughter debates suggest that notions of Jews as the ‘third’ seemingly had a range exceeding agrarian nationalist Peasant Party’s MPs.

Then, to what extent do the findings in this dissertation correspond to Lorenz’ emphasis on the flexibility of Norwegian interwar anti-Semitism, and his adaptation of Volkov’s hypothesis of anti-Semitism as a response to conjunctural changes and crises?¹¹²¹ In the sense that the entire interwar period has been characterised as a crisis period,¹¹²² it certainly does; however, it is more difficult to relate the controversy’s peak phases to concrete crises and other events which could have suggested Jews’ being targeted in hate-rhetoric. Nevertheless, at least one instance stands out, namely the 1927 election and the campaigns against the centre-right parties’ handling of the economic crisis in wake of the war. In the peasant movement press, Jews were already being pointed out as responsible for the country’s economic crisis through their alleged control over state loans. In 1927, also parts of the labour movement press used the opportunity to accuse the centre-right parties for being dictated to by ‘bank Jews’.

¹¹¹⁷ Klug 1989b, p. 22.

¹¹¹⁸ Johansen 1984, p. 72.

¹¹¹⁹ Holz 2004.

¹¹²⁰ Simonsen 2009; Simonsen 2011, p. 155f.

¹¹²¹ Lorenz 2011a; Volkov 1990.

¹¹²² Kjeldstadli 1994, p. 21.

On the other hand, the 1913 controversy, taking place prior to the war- and post-war difficulties, did not have any explicit relation to changes or events on Norwegian society. Rather, it was the result of a specific event in Kristiania local politics, enabling anti-Semitic attacks, namely the establishment of the Kristiania public slaughterhouse. However, both this instance and the 1926 controversy highlight how different groups used the controversy to express anti-Semitic rhetoric of which they were already proponents. This explains for instance the participation of clergymen, police and self-proclaimed anti-Semites, each group having their particular motives for protesting against kosher slaughtering. More than anything else, their use of the kosher slaughter issue highlights the extraordinary flexibility of anti-Semitic prejudices and rhetoric in Norwegian interwar society. Furthermore, the overwhelming parliamentary majority indicate the potential of this rhetoric and the extent of the 'hidden', structural anti-Semitism underlying anti-Semitic attacks. There is still much to be said about the range of latent anti-Semitism and prejudices in Norwegian society beyond certain actors and groups. Hopefully, ongoing and future research will contribute to reveal the extent and character of latent anti-Semitic prejudices in Norwegian society prior to World War II.¹¹²³

Which implications do the findings and conclusions in this dissertation have for the present day legislation? There might be many legitimate reasons for restricting religious freedom, and concern for animals is one of these. However, the ideological climate in which the 1929 slaughter law was conceived should have evoked reflections among post-war politicians who maintained the unconditional requirement of previous stunning in the 1974 animal protection law and in the recent Animal Welfare Act. When this only to a very limited extent was the case, new questions arise about the status of Jews in Norwegian post-war society. These questions will not be addressed here, but constitute a point of departure for further research.

¹¹²³ Especially the final results of the project 'the Jew as a cultural construction' at the Center for The Center for Studies of the Holocaust and Religious Minorities.

Appendix

Parliamentary votes by party affiliation

Party	1927 postponement		1928 postponement		1929 exemption	
	for	against	for	against	for	against
Communist	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	0	1 (100%)	0	1 (100%)
Labour	6 (30)	14 (70%)	23 (79,3%)	6 (20,7%)	6 (13,6%)	38 (86,4%)
Labour Dem.	0	1 (100%)	0	0	0	1 (100%)
Peasant Party	0	17 (100%)	0	17 (100%)	0	20 (100%)
Liberal Party	17 (74%)	6 (26%)	18 (94,7%)	1 (5,3%)	13 (59,1%)	9 (40,9%)
Conservative	23 (77%)	7 (23%)	2 (15,4%)	11 (84,6%)	2 (10,5%)	17 (89,5%)
Liberal Left	6 (86%)	1 (14%)	0	3 (100%)	0	2 (100%)
Total	55	48	43	39	21	88

Parliamentary votes by constituency

Constituency	1927 postponement		1928 postponement		1929 exemption	
	for	against	for	against	for	against
Østfold	2	5	2	4	0	7
Akershus	2	5	1	4	0	7
Hedmark	1	5	1	5	0	9
Oppland	0	3	0	1	0	2
Buskerud	1	4	3	0	0	6
Vestfold	3	2	2	3	0	5
Telemark	3	2	1	1	0	6
Aust-Agder	3	1	2	2	1	4
Vest-Agder	5	0	5	0	2	3
Rogaland	3	4	4	1	2	4
Hordaland	3	2	3	1	2	3
Sogn/Fjordane	2	2	1	2	0	3
Møre/Romsdal	4	3	3	3	1	6
Sør-Trøndelag	2	1	2	1	1	2
Nord-Trøndelag	0	4	2	4	1	4
Nordland	5	1	3	4	2	5
Troms	4	1	4	0	4	2
Finnmark	1	2	2	1	1	3
Oslo	2	1	1	1	1	3
Bergen	5	0	1	1	1	2
Trondheim	4	0	0	0	2	2
Total	55	48	43	39	21	88

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