

PSALM OF THE WORLD CITIZEN  
ALIENATION, ASSIMILATION AND ZIONISM IN FEUCHTWANGER'S  
JOSEPHUS TRILOGY  
[a draft]

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by James Bloom

It was portentous that the manuscript of the projected second volume of Lion Feuchtwanger's (hereafter, LF) planned two-volume novel about Josephus' life and times was destroyed by the Nazi toughs who plundered his Berlin home and forced him into exile. In a flight worthy of a spy thriller, the author escaped from a French internment camp in 1940 and made his way, via disguises, subterfuge, and safe houses, to the US to join fellow German refugee writers and artists in their exile's enclave in LA. All the while the contours of the second and third volumes of the trilogy were being shaped by the sinister currents buffeting world Jewry.

While LF was reconstructing the second and writing the third volume of the trilogy, the extraordinary cultural edifice built by Europe's Jewish intelligentsia was being destroyed all around him. The prolonged rewrite of the expanded work was interesting not only for what it told us about LF's changing mindset and personal circumstances but was also significant for the employment of Josephus to grapple with the 20<sup>th</sup> century crisis of Judaism. LF's notion of an exalted trans-national bridging role for Judaism, reflected in his Josephus persona of the first volume, was being invalidated by the horrors of the looming Holocaust; LF's Josephus characterization morphed to reflect this evolution..

The writing of LF's masterwork would span almost a decade and a half, during which period any notion that the Third Reich's distinguished Jewish authors could surmount that cauldron of race-hatred was decisively crushed. His portrayal of Flavius Josephus's evolving dilemma in the First Century AD reflects the several stages of LF's personal struggle to come to terms with Hitler's eradication of German-Jewish culture.

During his precarious exile in Vichy France LF had to regenerate the lost manuscript from memory and, in doing so, he produced an eventual second and third volumes—the last in the US-- each of which reflected his growing sense of despair that Jews could live a full life in Europe, let alone Germany. His final volume forlornly betokened his dismal acquiescence that the Zionist enterprise in Palestine, which he had initially doubted, was, with stipulations, perhaps the correct solution after all. This sea-change was a expression of the deteriorating situation in Germany and Europe between the publication of the first volume—*Der juedische krieg*—in 1932, and the completion of his work on the third and final book--*Der Tag wird kommen*-- in 1942 ( the English language edition; 1945 in German).

At the beginning of his literary career LF had misgivings that the Zionist programme comprised a desirable or effective resolution of the Jewish self-identity crisis. Conversely, he was confident that the disproportionately large contribution of German Jews to international culture and civilization would defeat the ill-conceived efforts by the upstart fascists to disenfranchise them. Ergo, a national home in Palestine would be unnecessary. He disparaged *all* nationalisms, including the Jewish nationalist movement, as divisive, outdated relics of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, he was initially optimistic that the National Socialists would not prevail in German politics. Later, when they did attain

power, LF still held out the hope that the anti-Jewish hooliganism of the Hitlerite thugs would be tempered by the sophisticated *weltgeist* of the German intellectual elite.

As LF saw it, the difficulty faced by the world's Jewish populations was that they straddled two stools: (1) the God-ordained paragon of an ideal world-wide community of ecumenical tolerance and understanding and (2) reliance upon a unique, separatist and robustly protective Jewish identity (i.e., Zealots of the first century, Zionists of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>). This duality was an unflagging leitmotif running through LF's literary works, just over half of which expressly depict this Jewish "split personality".

This characteristic of the Jewish role in melding the disparate nationalisms of the world is most explicitly and comprehensively conveyed in LF's Josephus trilogy. The literary conceit of the Psalm of the World Citizen, featured throughout the trilogy in varying forms, was the objectification of the first ideal. Over the decade and a half during which the trilogy was composed, the enormity of Hitler's Final Solution became manifest. Ultimately it disabused LF-- and his semi fictional Josephus-- of ever achieving 'world citizenship' in an intolerant world. The Psalm changed from one extolling world-citizenship to one exhorting his fellow Jews to brace up and emancipate their native land by forging a new covenant.

This paper will examine LF's shift from an assimilationist and cosmopolitan notion of Judaism, shaped by his optimistic pacifist/Marxist outlook on the Jewish mission to the world, to his halfhearted endorsement of the Jewish nationalist plan of action embodied by Zionism. This change can be most distinctly traced through the nearly 1500 pages of the Josephus trilogy, though, to a lesser extent, it is represented in LF's other Jewish-themed novels. This evolving pattern of response to the humanitarian issues affecting his work can also be found in his various statements about the situation of Jews in Germany and Europe and the prospects of creating a Jewish state in Palestine, corresponding with the development of these views in the stages of completing the Josephus trilogy. Stage, radio and rudimentary screen adaptations of the trilogy may shed further light on this issue. Thanks to the power of his Josephus trilogy, LF's interpretation of Josephus as the embodiment of Jewish dichotomy within German—and Occidental--culture is a highly significant expression of the modern reception of Josephus.

Probably the most distinguished novelist of his generation, renowned for his effective, meticulously researched and highly intriguing historical romances, LF occupied, before the advent of Hitler, an enviable position in German letters. His books were translated into numerous languages, and in his own tongue he was considered a stylist of the first order. Using a thorough knowledge of historical detail and playing the role of an enlightened philosopher with a highly idiosyncratic literary style, he engaged both ancient Jewish history and the dilemmas of Jewish existence in his key writings. Throughout his career, Feuchtwanger was drawn to a central theme of Jewishness, and his best work presents the enigma of the Jew and treats the quandary of being Jewish in a non-Jewish world. He depicts the predicament of the "modern" Jew, of whatever historical period, in achieving a synthesis of his or her particular relationship to the Jewish people and a universal relationship to all humanity.

It was not surprising, therefore, that for a while he flirted with the notions of "diaspora nationalism." As will be explained in more detail, this concept held that Jews could remain in a "stateless" limbo within a broader national culture and yet adhere to what LF saw to be an all-encompassing Jewish ethos that bridged national boundaries. In his novel, *Josephus*, or *Der juedische*

*krieg*—the initial installment in what was to eventually morph into a trilogy--- he expounded this theory through the life of his cosmopolite protagonist. Even without a Jewish state, Josephus/Feuchtwanger contended, Judaism could live in sort of an international vacuum.

The parallel between Josephus and LF is unmistakable: the Romanized Jew shaping the history of his people according to the highest standards of Roman history, the Bavarian Jew recounting the history of European Jewry through an international empire of multi-translated best-sellers. Called from his retirement and sent back to Judaea to deal with an uprising, LF's Josephus is forced to choose between assimilation and his Jewish identity, just as LF, plucked from the center of the German literary establishment, found himself yet another Jew in exile, forced to examine, and perhaps affirm, a special destiny for his coreligionists. Josephus, in the end, chooses his Jewishness. LF likewise seems to have warmed to the nascent Jewish enterprise in Palestine after 1940, as, forced into exile and realizing the homeless state of his fellow German Jews, he despaired of his earlier universalist illusion embraced by his Josephus. This process is reflected in the changes to the original Psalm and the circumstances surrounding these alterations through the second and third volumes of the trilogy.

LF rewrote the unrecoverable second volume of his tripartite Josephus work as a harried exile in France and added the third one, finalizing the manuscript in the United States. In these books, the protagonist Flavius Josephus experiences drastic turns in his life. These changes are a reflection of the sharp reversal of LF's own fortunes. The first volume ended with Josephus rejecting the armed resistance in which he was so recently a commander. The second volume echoes the experiences of LF's initial years in exile and his commitment to a movement of literati with a strong Marxist "popular front" element—intellectually combative, but thus far not so in a physical sense. The last volume provides an even starker contrast to the principles illustrated in the first volume and yet does not come full circle in the sense that he once again embraces armed struggle as a panacea.

Written in the precarious situation of half-imprisonment in the American consulate in Marseille, parallels between the emperor Domitian and Hitler, only hinted at in the second volume, are more pointed, albeit nuanced, by the third. Domitian is shown as Hitler-like in some aspects, yet more profound and more of a tragic figure than Hitler—who was an unsurprising target of the broad satire in *Erfolg*, (1930) and even the overstated cartoon-like characterization of *Der falsche Nero* (1936).

While LF was in his French exile, researching for rewriting the lost manuscript for the second volume of the trilogy, he came upon an obscure though oft-repeated myth according to which Nero had not really died, but merely departed to disappear in the inscrutable East. An imposter claiming to be Nero (actually Terentius Maximus during the reign of Titus) had arisen and ruled over one of the easternmost provinces of the Empire. This episode rated only a parenthetical aside in book two of the trilogy, but the fictional potential of the legend impressed LF as another suitable vehicle for a swipe at the increasingly virulent Hitler regime. Once more he postponed the completion of the Josephus project, this time volume three, in order to utilize the story for an oblique analogy directed at the growing tyranny of the Third Reich, particularly Hitler's entourage. The book infuriated the Nazis, as confirmed by a ranting radio broadcast by Goebbels that LF picked up. The book was not a critical success, as LF's usurper was deemed to be too silly and overstated, a charge also leveled at Charlie Chaplin's cinematic lampoon of 1940, *The Great Dictator*.

The Flavius Josephus of the third installment, more out of desperation than conviction, ultimately clings to a radical position, abjectly joining the doomed armed fight against dictatorship,

implicitly in synch with LF's own modern-day fallback position of supporting a Zionism “within borders”( tied to the land) so as to guarantee a safe haven for his endangered fellow Jews. At first sight, it might appear that LF, at last realizing the immensity and starkness of the Nazi plan to eradicate the Jewish people, interpreted his Josephus character as having returned to the militancy of his early days as commander of the Judaeen rebel forces in Galilee. But this would be an oversimplification.

In order to comprehend this transmutation, one first needs to understand some aspects of LF's personal background and that of his cultural and political environment. Born in 1884 into a religiously orthodox Jewish, albeit fervently nationalist, wealthy family (his father owned a margarine factory) that also maintained ties to German secular culture, LF came to reject the formalities of his parents' orthodox religious Judaism, while embracing cultural Judaism and its connection with the broader world of German arts and literature. The family was able to ensure Lion a first-rate education and he proved a brilliant and avid scholar. His formal education immersed him in Greek and Latin classical literature as well as the Germanic intellectual culture, while his family's religious convictions bequeathed to him the core of Jewish ideals. Rejecting his parents' strict orthodoxy, Feuchtwanger described himself as being German by language and culture, Jewish by heritage and culture, and international by being both German and Jewish.

With this background he stands in the tradition of the assimilated German Jews of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, without however, sharing the often-felt devastation or even the so-called ‘self-hatred’ of some of its representatives. LF had no desire to deny his deep roots in Judaism and saw his Jewish heritage in a thoroughly positive light. For him to be Jewish was essentially to share a common mentality, a common attitude. That is, to participate in an almost 3000-year-old tradition about what is ‘good’ and what is ‘evil’, and to agree on ethical problems on the basic and essential views of morals and humanity. This common spiritual heritage LF saw embodied in the amorphous God of the Jews, whom he considered as a ‘spiritual principle’ It was the Judaism of the humanist Spinoza rather than that of the stringent legalisms of the Talmud. Later in his career, this viewpoint would mesh nicely with his socialist outlook

.At the University of Munich (1903-7), where he studied philology, history and anthropology, LF wrote his dissertation on the origins of Heinrich Heine's *The Rabbi of Bacherach* (1840) This fragmentary narrative poem tells the story of how two anti-Semites posing as fellow Jews wangled their way into a Passover Seder in medieval Germany in order to plant a corpse on the premises so they could fabricate the vicious, habitual accusation of ritual murder against the rabbi and his family, who are consequently forced to flee for their lives. Moreover, Heinrich Heine was an ambivalent Jew, like LF, and, similarly to LF, focused on Jewish history in a novel, the writing of which was preceded by intensive study of the sources. LF's dismissive comments on fictional treatments of Heine's topic are interesting in light of his later career: “At the present time, medieval Judaism has not found an author who has the capacity to convey its complete emotional spectrum. Most efforts in this area have been artistically worthless story literature for Jewish newspapers,” [ Feuchtwanger, L. *Heinrich Heines Fragment: "Der rabbi von Bacherach" Eine kritische Studie*].

While working on the novel, Heine was baptized, and it became increasingly clear to him that this novel dramatizing the monstrous “blood libel” might stir up hatred and rejection in the Christian world. As a result, the work remained unfinished and unpublished for over fifteen years. Heine, who was searching for a modus vivendi, born as a Jew living in a Christian society, found it all but impossible to complete a novel, the central concern of which was anti-Jewish violence irreconcilable

with any form of peaceful coexistence. Later, Heine came to regret his expedient baptism and always identified strongly with the Jewish people. Unlike Heine, LF would not balk at portraying the difficulties of Jews toiling in places where they were unwelcome and routinely falsely accused of the most heinous offenses at a time when Gentiles were offended by their characterization and Jews winced at theirs.

LF could readily identify with the alienated Jewish *litterateur* Heine. In his dissertation, LF analyzed the impact of Heine's Jewishness on the text. In Heine, LF saw a prototype for the problematic attempt to succeed in forging a symbiosis of Jewish and German, or better, 'European', identities. The thesis diagnoses Heine's inner conflict, which LF later portrays in his own literary figures (e.g. Suess-Oppenheim, the Oppermanns, Raquel, Josephus). It was an early indication of what would become LF's lifelong pursuit of the Jewish question via the historical novel.

Deep-seated German prejudice prevented further advancement in the reputable academic career LF's father desired for him—unless, like Heine, he would convert to Christianity. He rebelled against the Jewish and bourgeois world of his family by first turning away from the orthodox lifestyle of his observant parents, and then, after the completion of his dissertation, choosing a financially insecure career and bohemian existence as literary critic, playwright and novelist over a respectable and dependable living as an academician. While he rejected the formal ceremonial practices of Judaism, the history and lore of his people was indelibly embedded in LF's psyche. His childhood home had a well-stocked library of Jewish-themed material, both religious and historical. His father, albeit a businessman, avidly imbibed Judaica. Immersed in all that was good in Greek, Latin, German and Jewish culture and naively confident in his life mission to anoint the German soul with the beneficial balm of egalitarian Jewish values, LF thus turned to writing.

During the formative period of his writing career, LF was primarily engaged with the vibrant theater scene in Berlin of the early 1900s as both playwright and critic. "Theatricality" (and cinematic technique) was to become a hallmark of his work during his later vocation as a novelist. Several of the one-act plays at the beginning of this period (1905-06) dealt with Jewish subjects: *Joel*, *Koenig Saul*, and *Das Weib des Urias*, all drawing on LF's rich store of biblical knowledge.

Prior to this LF had briefly served in the German army during the First World War, but was given a medical discharge after five months. This experience reinforced his avidly pacifist mentality, which merged with the socialism/internationalism of many of his fellow German anti-war activists after the armistice. His early plays and critiques were tinged with this pacifist/socialist orientation and several were censored on that account.

Among his early plays was a collaboration with Bertolt Brecht titled *Jud Süß*. It was written in 1916, produced briefly in 1917 but subsequently withdrawn; LF sensed that the complex topic would be more suitable to the novel genre. The play dramatizes the downfall of an 18<sup>th</sup> century court Jew, Joseph Süß Oppenheimer, as much a tragic victim of his own pridefulness as of toxic German anti-Semitism. This message would form the subject of LF's best-selling 1925 novel with that title. In his later fictionalization of the career of Joseph Süß Oppenheimer, originally written in 1921-22, LF advanced the notion of Jews as an "Eastern" people who are destined to invest the rich European culture of their host nations with cosmopolitan ethical values of the Orient; it is a strain running like a red thread throughout LF's body of work, most exhaustively in the Josephus trilogy.

The intellectual groundwork for the world-view of LF and his fellow German-Jewish authors can be traced back to Immanuel Kant. In the late eighteenth century, German Enlightenment writers revived the notion of the cosmopolitan from the ancient Greek, where *'kosmopolitês'* meant one's sense of simultaneous allegiance to a city-state and a wider, universal context. The non-Jewish philosopher Kant became a key figure in this new debate when he demanded a *Weltbürgerrecht*, a universal law of citizenship, to which all humans were entitled. Of course, these Christian thinkers had little time for the Jews, who in their eyes were backwardly obsessed with their own idiosyncratic culture.

Nonetheless, German-Jewish intellectuals who sought to gain full recognition in German-speaking society enthusiastically embraced Kant's ideas and Goethe's cultural equivalent of a world literature. Soon, German-speaking Jews became seen as either too particularist on the one hand or too international on the other. This antisemitism, in all but name, had a profound effect on German-speaking Jews, rejecting the accepted definition of their own German and Austrian identities. Zionists called for a separate homeland, whereas others insisted their identity was not merely Jewish or German or Austrian, but one beyond ethnicity and national borders. And yet, this little-remembered Jewish engagement with cosmopolitanism in Germany and Austria between the 1870s and 1930s was a hotbed of ideas that ultimately drove the formation of the European Union near the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. German-speaking Jewish intellectuals were among the first to see their identity as European.

It is useful here to note how LF first arrived at the concept of utilizing Flavius Josephus as the ideal vehicle with which to impart his "universal Jew" message. According to his wife, Marta, she and LF were on their two-year extended "grand tour" "honeymoon in Rome in 1912 and passed under the Arch of Titus and viewed the infamous relief depicting the triumphal procession after the victory in Judaea, with the Jews in chains bearing the captured ceremonial paraphernalia from the Temple. This scene, exemplifying the arrogance of Rome and the humbling of Judaea, was indelibly burned into LF's psyche. Marta noted that LF was awestruck and silently contemplative as he viewed the frieze. But the notion of adapting this awe-inspiring topic to a novel format would have to wait until LF had garnered more experience of the world. From that moment on, LF nurtured the idea of presenting this story in a fictional format, but it took years before he felt he could do it justice. At the time, according to Marta, he was a playwright, essentially an entertainer, not taking his work all that seriously, and didn't feel up to tackling grave, epic subjects. But the seed was planted, needing only nurturing through life experience and ripening of mindset.

LF's first attempt to take on the issue of Jewish assimilation, as noted above, was his short-lived play, *Jud Süß*, (1917-18) which later evolved into the novel by that name. It marks the first sprouting of the expressly Jewish themes that would come to characterize most of LF's fictional works. Such outspoken exposition of the dilemma facing Jewish intellectuals in Europe was uncommon at that time. Franz Kafka and Jakob Wassermann are best known for their *angst*-ridden stance towards their Jewishness; Arthur Schnitzler, Franz Werfel, Stefan Zweig, and Joseph Roth used explicit Jewish motifs only sparingly. At a time when many German-Jewish authors either muted or disguised their Jewish content, LF showcased his.

The novel, *Jud Süß*, not published until 1925 but completed in 1921-22, (English edition titled *Power*) was based on the real-life story of Joseph Süß-Opppenheimer. The play had dallied with the influence of Rabbi Gamaliel, a Kabbalist mystic, but the novel diminished that aspect. To the extent that it can be considered as setting the groundwork for the Josephus trilogy, it will be treated briefly here.

During his short-lived reign from 1733 to 1737, Prince Karl Alexander grew to depend upon the Jewish financier, Joseph Süß Oppenheimer, in the aristocrat's ongoing campaign of squeezing every possible cent from his subjects in order to finance his army and his lavish court. Impatient with the constraints placed upon him by Wurttemberg's constitution, he planned a *coup d'etat* which would have established him as an absolute sovereign. To add insult to injury, he also planned to impose his own Catholic faith on his traditionally protestant Swabians. His unexpected death in 1737 stymied the plot and the wrath of the populace erupted against the deceased's former advisers. Most escaped with a beating or two, mixed with insults and vituperation. They were Swabians, members of established families, individuals who could be of use to a future government. The outsider Oppenheimer, the Jew, was a different matter altogether. Here the rage of the populace could find free expression, a rage which culminated with the public hanging of Süß Oppenheimer in 1738. Feuchtwanger was not the first to utilize this subject.

In 1827, Wilhelm Hauff, best-known for his authorship of fairy tales, had created a fanciful version of the tale, also titled *Jud Süß*. In his stories, Hauff combines romantic and fantastic elements (such as a belated realization that the protagonist was of Jewish origin) with realistic, contemporary and satirical strains. Rather than conveying an historically authentic tale, Hauff merely wanted to entertain his readers. Thus he added such erroneous details as that Süß Oppenheimer was unaware that he was Jewish until this fact was revealed to him late in the novel.

LF had in mind to base his novel on the character of Walther Rathenau, the German-Jewish industrialist, politician, writer, and statesman who served as Foreign Minister of Germany during the Weimar Republic. He thought more of the matter, and ultimately decided that Rathenau was too much in the headlines to drive home his point; it required historical perspective. So he fell back upon the novelization of his earlier play on Joseph Süß Oppenheimer so as to gain historical distance for his theme. Nonetheless, Rathenau was a model for his fiction. When the minister was assassinated by an ultra-nationalist anti-Semite in 1922, LF's manuscript was finished and seeking a publisher, but the act drove home the message of the novel even more forcefully. Rathenau had combined democratic convictions and a strong belief in international cooperation with economic experience and a knowledge of foreign countries, much as did Josephus in the forthcoming trilogy.

For the 1940 film version, commissioned by Joseph Goebbels of the Nazi party, the Hauff version was used and expanded upon, the screenplay depicting Suess-Oppenheimer as the quintessential lecherous, dissembling, conniving Jew. In spite of being highly stereotyped, this film was better acted and produced than much of the propaganda of the Third Reich, and became one of Germany's most popular exports of the period. Today, distribution of the film is forbidden in many countries in Europe. It is a common misconception that Goebbels commissioned an anti-Semitic adaptation of LF's work for the film in order to humiliate the Jewish author, but, as was mentioned, the Hauff interpretation seems to have also influenced the screenplay. LF's version was cherry-picked and distorted to draw out the unsavory aspects of Suess-Oppenheimer and embellished with inventions playing upon anti-Jewish canards, such as the rape of a Christian woman

LF himself had assumed that his own work was what Herr Goebbels had grotesquely misappropriated to make the pernicious film. He wrote an open letter published in *The Sentinel*, September 18, 1941 (published by *The American Jewish Weekly*, Chicago) to chastise his fellow thespians who had agreed to star in the Nazi travesty: “. . . you, Gentlemen, have changed my novel 'Power' (Jud Suess) by adding a touch of Tosca, into a vile anti-Semitic movie a la Streicher and his

Sturmer". . ."Well, I try to envisage you, Gentlemen. I try to imagine how Goebbels may have said to one of you: 'Then there is that Jew Süß. Feuchtwanger made him immensely popular and, being of an objective turn of mind as these Jews happen to be, he has also so conveniently displayed everything about the Jew that can be used against him. Nothing easier than to pocket that and to drop the other two thirds of the book. There'll be a nice profit.' "

In LF's presentation, Süß-Oppehneimer's „spirituality” is of a rather eccentric sort. It does not consist of a return to the sacred books nor does it comprise concrete actions on behalf of the Jewish community. The crux of Süß's spirituality consists in what LF termed the special „destiny of the Jews“ to represent the „White Man's“ turn to Oriental values. Being vainglorious and yearning for political power—at least initially--Süß-Oppehneimer displays another characteristic of LF's Jewish protagonists, and can be seen at its apex in the character of Josephus. “ At this point it is well to examine LF's non-fictional compositions dealing with the *Judenfrage*. during the formative years of his thinking on the topic.

In a satirical 1920 essay, “Conversations with the Wandering Jew” [*Gespraeche mit dem ewigen Jueden*], he expressed guarded optimism about Jewish life in Germany, convinced of the certain success of the German-Jewish symbiosis, notwithstanding the grave portents of the voices of irrational Jew hatred. In spite of his *sang froid* with respect to the lunatic fringe of that time, he detected danger if, in the words of Yeats' *The Second Coming*”, “the center cannot hold” and “mere anarchy is loosed upon the world”.. He articulated a prescient mental image of the dangerous future portended by the rise of the new fascism.

"Towers of Hebrew books were burnt, and pyres were erected high up into the clouds, and people cheered, covered in soot, countless priests and voices sang: *Gloria in excelsis Deo*. Caravans of men, women, children dragged themselves across the square from all sides; they were naked or in rags, and they had nothing with them but corpses and the bundles of books, torn, desecrated, defiled with excrement, heaped scrolls of books. and they were followed by lines of men in caftans and women and children in the clothes of our day, a multitudinous, incessant procession.. “

In 1930, LF made explicit the Hegelian conception of “the historical process of the Jews.”(*Der historische Prozess der Juden*, 1930) Given ancient Judaea's geographic position at the crossroads of the world, he asserted, it was inevitable that the ancient Jews would absorb the teachings of three regions: “The East taught them to renounce; the West taught them to become; the Middle East to be.” “Oriental” nations and “peoples of color” have historically possessed a superior religious, psychological, and social sense, he affirms, whereas the “white-skinned,” “barbaric” peoples of the West concentrated their energy on “technological progress, the invention of machines”. In other words, he argued, Judaism was essentially a vital principle or mentality, embedded in tradition and historical consciousness—thereby ignoring industrial/economic effects and national borders and, hence, inherently international. Consequently, the Jews, LF claims, are uniquely suited for the role of cultural mediators. This function would be further described in LF's thoughts on contemporary Zionism, discussed below.

His work on the Josephus project was begun in 1926, but was temporarily shelved in order to deal with a more pressing issue: the menace of rampant fascism beginning to penetrate the Weimar Republic's political and cultural life. Besides, the Josephus vehicle would require much thought, as the



central character was a multi-layered slippery character to interpret. His next successful work, *Erfolg* (*Success*, 1930) is noteworthy as a bold, early attack on the National Socialists, who at that time were gaining some traction in German politics but by no means were assured of achieving dominance. Nonetheless, one ridiculed them at his or her own peril, as their goons were active in the smaller towns, intimidating any opponents with brutal force. The novel was a contemporary *roman à clef*, a novel of a gloriously liberal but doomed Weimar Republic moving inexorably toward fascism. Published just three years before Hitler's rise to power, the book is not only prophetic of Germany's totalitarianism, but uncanny in its multi-level depiction of the corruptive process.

The work not only inevitably incensed the Nazi targets of the satire—they were gaining power in the Reichstag by then and were becoming more strident in their threats against their detractors-- but surprisingly even drew rebukes from fellow Jews who thought it unfairly defamed their native Munich. It was for this satirical swipe at the Nazis that LF was branded as a “premature anti-Fascist” right after the Hitler takeover in 1933 and, as a consequence, his citizenship and doctorates were revoked, and his books designated for burning.

After the completion of *Erfolg*, Feuchtwanger returned to the project of writing a historical novel based on the dramatically embroidered life history of Flavius Josephus, which, as I remarked, had fermented in his brain since his electrifying encounter with the Arch of Titus some 18 years earlier. This new novel about Josef Ben Matthias was conceived to appear in two volumes. After the publication of the first volume, *Der juedische Krieg* (The Jewish War, 1932), and while Feuchtwanger was visiting the United States, the Nazis looted his house in Berlin and destroyed his manuscript and important material for the second volume. Since it was impossible to reconstruct the original version in his French exile, he decided to widen the scope of the novel—which he stated in his postscript to the second volume, had outgrown its framework---and publish it in three parts. *Die Sohne* (The Sons) came out in 1935 with the exile publishing house Querido in Amsterdam; *Der Tag wird kommen* first appeared in English (*The Day Will Come*, 1942) before Bermann-Fischer published the German language version in Stockholm in 1945. He didn't set out in 1926 to make any equation between the Romans of the first century and the German National Socialists of the 20<sup>th</sup>, nor did he regard the Zealot movement of the earlier era as an analogue of the Zionist movement of the later epoch. I will continue the discussion of what most critics regard to be LF's most important work, both with respect to his goals as an author of historical novels and as the embodiment of his outlook on the travails and aspirations of world Jewry in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Meanwhile, the circumstances under which the prolonged gestation and publication of the trilogy are important to understanding LF's Josephus concept.

LF, a well-known author by the beginning of the 1930s, was in North America on a lengthy lecture tour at the time of Hitler's seizure of power. Already in the Nazis' sights for his satirical barbs, particularly in *Erfolg*, he attacked Hitler publicly from abroad, ensuring that he was a marked man at home. Two months later, Feuchtwanger's house in Berlin was ransacked, and the manuscript of the second volume of the *Flavius Josephus* tripartite work destroyed along with his valuable collection of rare editions, especially some early prints of Josephus's works and critical literature about him; one year of work was lost along with his research materials. On May 10, 1933 his (and other intellectuals') books were publicly burnt. On August 23, his name was published with 33 others on the first “deprivation of citizenship” list. It was fortunate that the then-current German ambassador to the United States, von Ptittwitz, no fan of the National Socialists, warned LF that he should not return to Germany as there was a strong probability he would be arrested and possibly sent to a concentration

camp.

LF was lucky through this misfortune. On his lecture tour in the U.S. in 1932-33 he met Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of the future president, an event that became crucial for his escape from Europe. The writer lived for several years in Sanary-sur-Mer, a center for German exile writers in France. With the beginning of the Second World War, Feuchtwanger was interned (as a German expatriate he was considered an enemy alien just before the fall of France), then released, and only barely reached the American consulate in Marseille. From there he crossed the Atlantic and began a new life in Pacific Palisades (California). Because of a large Anglophone readership for his novels, Feuchtwanger had no material problems in exile.

During his American tour, LF was interviewed by the Jewish Daily Bulletin (November 20, 1932, pp.3-4) and opined that "Hitlerism has brought not only hardship for the Jews of Germany but has also accomplished some good in that it has strengthened the consolidation of German Jewry." Asked for his view on the significance to the Jews of the then recent resignation of the von Papen cabinet, LF said that the von Papen government is worse for the Jews than a Hitler regime. "The Hitlerites are at least outspoken in their dislike of the Jews, while the von Papen regime quietly puts into operation a discrimination of its own. Jews are systematically weeded out of the theatrical, motion picture and radio professions, all of which they have built up, thanks to that same von Papen government." However, LF was confident that the crest of the Hitlerite wave of ascendancy had been broken and that the movement was then in a state of receding. Hitler, he stated, did not properly utilize the opportunities offered him at the peak of his movement. LF denied that he had any intention of following in the footsteps of a number of his colleagues who renounced German citizenship because of the anti-Semitic movement. He mentioned that he "was too strongly aligned with German culture to take such a step."

Asked whether he was a Zionist, LF replied that he is a "cultural Zionist" and that he would like to see established in Palestine a cultural Jewish center. "I hold that the Hebrew University in Jerusalem marks an excellent beginning toward that end. He revealed that he was planning a trip to Palestine and that he will deliver a series of lectures at the Hebrew University. This project, he said, he discussed with Dr. Chaim Weizmann in London recently.

"I want to make it clear, however, that I am not a Nationalist and that I am opposed to any aspect of chauvinistic nationalism, even when it is Jewish. My attitude toward Nationalism and Zionism approximates that of Professor Einstein," he stated. "I am an internationalist in the broad meaning of the world. I am greatly interested in Jewish life because I am deeply conscious of it."

It was during this trip to the United States, that LF made his most detailed remarks on Zionism to that date. They were quoted in the Jewish Daily Bulletin for December 21, 1932 and given on the occasion of the graduation of 12 M.A. students from the Hebrew University. Dr. Rosenbach, a noted bibliophile and book-collector of New York and Philadelphia, gave a dinner preceding the reception to LF, at his town house and LF was asked to say a few words. His position on Zionism as of late 1932 is worth quoting in full, as it shows the state of his thinking on Jewish nationalism right after the publication of his first volume of the Josephus trilogy, *Der Juedische Krieg*:

"Plainly spoken, I am not in every respect a friend of Zionism and of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. You know that there are four main ideologies of nationalism, namely: the political regional theory, the theory of race, the ideology of the common sharing of historical

experiences, and the theory of common language. I am convinced that all these four ideologies have only restricted application to Judaism, or none at all. I am convinced that Judaism is not a race, is not a common soil, is not a common way of life, is not a common language. I know, of course, that just that is the aim of Zionism, to give a common soil and a common language to the Jews. But it is just this last question which makes me, with all my sympathy, a little skeptical about the program of Zionism.

“It is curious and a little tragic that a nation so eminently literary as the Jews, lacks just this common bond. I understand, therefore, thoroughly the desires of the Zionists to fill this lack. I sincerely hope that they succeed, but I can’t imagine that they will.

“I follow, I repeat, with the greatest interest and with the warmest sympathy, the strivings of the Zionists today to make a living language of Hebrew. I know that already today many thousands speak Hebrew in daily life from childhood on. I have heard it spoken myself, and I like to hear it. I am touched when I read my books in Hebrew, but, frankly, I don’t believe that a language which for so long a time has been cut off from a living development can be artificially revitalized.

“But with this doubt of the endeavors of Zionism to create a new language, all my objections against Zionism are exhausted. I have stated: that Judaism is not race, not a common soil, not a common way of life, not a common language. You, ladies and gentlemen, probably will ask me, what then is Judaism?

“I think Judaism is a common mentality. It is a universal agreement, a consensus omnium about the most important questions.

“I am not a Utopian. I know even the most sublimated nationalism needs a concrete basis, and the natural center of all Jewish nationalism, be it what it may, is Jerusalem. Yes, why should I not confess it? I am bold enough to dream further than the most ardent Zionist, to dream, that Jerusalem would become the center not only of Judaism, but of the whole world. Yes, when I am quite bold, than I even dream that Jerusalem might become for the world what the founders of the League of Nations had dreamed Geneva would become for all mankind.

“The world rule of which I think, is very different from that of many Zionists. It is a spiritual rule, and only of the spirit. I conceive of Zionism in that light.

“It is true countries have till now always been conquered by violence, and the conquerors in part exterminated and in part enslaved the former population. We Jews, when we first took Palestine, did the very same thing. We exterminated and enslaved the natives, and we thought it blessed to settle in cities which we did not build. Later we had to go through very bitter experiences when other people exterminated us and enslaved us and settled in the cities we built. We are in the midst of the third conquest of Palestine. If this conquest is to succeed, and if it is to have significance, then it must be executed by other means than that of violence. The Third Israel has nothing in common with the Third Italy or the Third realm for which the German nationalists long. The task of the Third Realm of Israel, however, means to me the same as the task of the ancient Greeks after they had been defeated politically. Then, you know it, these defeated Greeks conquered the world without the use of violence, only with the aid of exemplary models

in the spirit, only through the mind. The same way, I think, should be the way and the task of the Third Realm of Israel.

“For this task, I think, the University of Jerusalem is a most important need. The natural center of a revised and subtilized (*sic*) Zionism, the natural center of the Jewish world and perhaps for the whole spiritual world, is not a government building, but the University of Jerusalem.

“The true Jewish nationalism, I repeat, in contrast to every other nationalism, has the tendency not to materialize itself but to transcend itself. It is cosmopolitan, it is in its essence messianic. Yes, Jewish nationalism longs to be dissolved away in a united world, like salt in water, itself dissolved, no longer visible, yet it is omnipresent and existing forever.

“But I am afraid other long centuries will be required until the world will be united in spirit. Till then, Jewish nationalism is necessary in its current materialistic shape and till then the Jewish University at Jerusalem is doubly necessary in order that Zionism will not forget its ultimate purpose.”

I note here that one of the prominent characteristics of the Left intellectuals in the Weimar Republic was their reliance on the written or uttered word, more than on experience. The faith in the power of the word or the pure “idea” was also the possession of Voelkisch (the movement associated with the left, signifying the proletariat, not the conservative front obsessed with “blood”—i.e., race) and other philosophers. Thus, LF claimed in 1933 that the book was more capable of establishing commonality and shared activity between people than was the tie to the soil. This ideal evokes the Joseph of the first volume of the trilogy, and most of the second, touting the value of his historical and polemical books (and his Psalms) as the fitting means of combating all those who would disparage the Jewish role in world affairs. Given Joseph's sophisticated outlook and his skill with words, this was the most effective weapon with which to propagate the true meaning of Judaism to the pagans..

This Pollyannish concept of Zionism, during a time when Jews were under increasing attack, not only in Germany but throughout those European nations where fascist movements were gaining ground, naturally drew some criticism. For one, Jacob Fishman, managing editor of the “Jewish Morning Journal,” referred in particular, to LF’s statement that he envisions Jerusalem as the spiritual center of the world and objected to his making the Hebrew University the centrifugal point of such a center. Fishman also derided LF’s view that the Jews have nothing in common except their mentality.

As quoted in the Jewish Daily Bulletin (December 23, 1932, Fishman countered:

Dr. Feuchtwanger’s address was disappointing, writes Mr. Fishman. Feuchtwanger, he says, places all emphasis upon the Hebrew University and brushes aside all else in Palestine. “It is remarkable that this novelist of rich fantasy sees nothing or pretends to see nothing of the great epoch, of the great drama now being created in Palestine, known as the rebuilding of ‘Alt-Neueland.’” Non Jewish writers, Mr. Fishman continues, cannot sate themselves with descriptions of what is transpiring in Palestine but Feuchtwanger, the novelist of historic themes, remains indifferent, and spurns the rebuilding work in Palestine in its national and practical aspects. There is no such thing as a “common mentality” in the Diaspora, with its pogroms and discrimination, Mr. Fishman holds. The only Jewish “mentality” of any value, is that which carries with it a national character, he says, the mentality which seeks to provide for the Jews a

place in the sun: to make the Jews a nation among nations.

But after the flight from the Nazi conquerors, both in his revered homeland and then in occupied France, LF had experienced a change of heart. In an interview with the *The Canadian-Jewish Chronicle*, December 20, 1940, p. 4, he had this to say:

It was not surprising, therefore, that for a while he flirted with the notions of diaspora nationalism. In his novel, *Josephus*, indeed, he expounded this theory through the life of his cosmopolite protagonist. Even without a Jewish state, it was contended, Judaism could live and have its being in sort of an international vacuum.

Now it appears he is disillusioned both in *Josephus* and in Joe (i.e., Stalin; LF's naive 1937 tract expressing approval of the Communist dictator's rule was cited in the article). The concept of a landless Jewry creating a culture out of thin air, as it were, holds no longer the charms of adoration. And as for Stalin, no doubt, the Berlin-Moscow pact has brought that evaluation into its proper perspective.

It is in Zionism that Feuchtwanger now sees a considerable hope for world Jewry. Said he, recently

“Based on social justice, a Jewish state is needed not only for the Jewish refugees but for all men who believe in a better world. I am not merely expressing a hope or a belief, I am firmly convinced of it as of a mathematical certainty: After the war you shall see the acme of a Jewish Palestine—a state where Jews regardless of political and economic differences will belong and feel at home. What was built in Palestine before the war is significant and important, but it was only a beginning. The great period of National Jewish renaissance and constructive work in Palestine will come after the war. “

Such, indeed, is the doctrine of current events. And history could find no apter pupil than Lion Feuchtwanger.

LF made similar remarks when invited to address the opening of the Palestinian Pavilion at the New York World's Fair in October of 1940. He had apparently put aside his earlier concerns that the nascent Jewish state might breed another Western-style nationalism, conceivably liberal to begin with but degenerating into an aggressive avariciousness. Now LF declared publicly that the war and the tragic fate of the Jews had taught him beyond question that no nation could exist without a geographical territory to call its own. [Remarks upon the Opening of the Palestine Pavilion at the World's Fair, October 22, 1940. In Feuchtwanger Memorial Library.]

In November, 1958, shortly before he died, he was interviewed at his home, the villa at Pacific Palisades, California and had this to say concerning the development of the State of Israel, and whether he believed its prospects were promising:

“Oh, yes, very much. The fact that the Hebrew language could develop into a living tongue and transform itself from a biblical language, or a language for antiquarians and archeologists (which is in itself a worthy thing), is a sign that the country is a living, culturally progressive phenomenon—not to mention its political and social significance, which awakens the national

consciousness and pride of the Jewish people. I believe that Israel is, even now, already a spiritual center, although it is too soon to speak of its cultural achievement, as the country is only 10 years old.”

[ Morning Freiheit, November, 1958 “Lion Feuchtwanger at Home—His views on Jewish history, historical fiction and current matters” by Abraham Bick]

LF's trip to the Soviet Union in 1937 and his unstinting praise of Stalin after an interview granted by the Russian dictator resulted in a paean to what Stalin and the Soviet state had done to foster true democracy among the downtrodden masses (in his travelogue/appraisal *Moscow, 1937*). This was in the midst of the infamous purges and the attendant Moscow “show trials” which LF credulously found to be fair and justified. The subject of LF's peculiar dalliance with Soviet-style communism is moderately related to the main topic of this paper and warrants some attention. His tract was not all unstinting praise; LF did express some reservations about Stalin's cult of personality and the failure to deliver on some personal freedom issues. However, he felt that the five year plans and the Soviet constitution—ignoring whether either was adhered to—were paragons of egalitarian empowerment.

Curiously, Stalin was quoted as praising the one great legacy of the Jews: the “eternally true” legend of Judas. Of course, he was making a backhanded slap at Trotsky, his Jewish erstwhile colleague whose assassination in Mexico he would shortly orchestrate. The infamous “show trials” were taking place during LF's visit and he accepted that they were justified and fair:

"Many of my friends, who are otherwise intelligent people, find these [the Show Trials], from beginning to end, in substance and in form, tragic-comical, barbaric, incredible, and appalling."

"But when I attended the second trial in Moscow, when I saw Pyatakov, Radek, and his friends, and heard what they said and how they said it, I was forced to accept the evidence of my own senses, and my doubts melted away."

It was his book praising Stalin's rule that gave rise to Congressional probes into his loyalty during the infamous witch-hunts of the McCarthy era and the chief cause of his never revisiting his native Germany—given the example of his friend Charlie Chaplin whose passport was revoked while he was on a trip to Russia and he was barred from reentering the US.. Despite his mistreatment at the hands of the House Unamerican Activities Committee, LF's books continued to sell well in the United States, as with the entire world.

With regard to the Jews, LF felt that the establishment of a Jewish autonomous zone in Birobizhan. was a positive step. As shown in the above statements, LF did not yet believe in Zionism as a political goal; the Birobizhan experiment seemed to him a positive example of a nation endowing its Jewish population with their civil rights. One can understand how, with his intimate knowledge of Hitler's monstrous villainy, LF is at pains to explain the Soviet Union's antidemocratic shortcomings as a natural outcome of its struggle against fascist Germany and Italy. After the war, when the Soviet mistreatment of its Jews was becoming manifest, LF was reticent, though his friends accepted that it was due to his fear that speaking out would further compromise the precarious position of Soviet Jewry.

LF provides a good example of the painful tension that left-wing Jewish intellectuals bore between their “humanity” and a consciousness of their Jewishness. His *Der juedische Krieg* (The

Jewish War, 1932) was consequently a song of praise for reason amidst the passion and violence of the age. In its quibbles about Jewish chauvinism, it reminded the intellectuals that they must identify with cosmopolitanism, rationalism, and love for all humanity. Nationalism stood opposed to these ideals in the outlook of left-wing intellectuals. In their minds there could be no compromise with nationalism. His Soviet style of progressive cosmopolitanism—an ostensible succor of the oppressed toiling multitude of the earth—had not yet proven to be a clay idol. At least not in LF's view.

*Die Soehne* (*The Sons, The Jew of Rome*, 1935), appearing after the Nazi seizure of power, still exalted reason but now despaired of its effects. This volume showed how reason itself could become a rigid and unbending system, especially when used on behalf of a theocratic nationalism. In this book too the conflict between LF the left-wing intellectual and LF the Jew came out in stark relief. He could not yet resolve this dilemma, and both parts of his personality existed side by side. The problem had become one of divided loyalty.

*Der Tag wird kommen* (*Josephus and the Emperor*, 1942, *The Dawn*, 1945), written in the early phase of World War II, despaired of rationalism and showed Josephus, the protagonist, sickened because he had betrayed his Jewish state in favor of a cosmopolitan utopia. Feuchtwanger the left-wing intellectual passed from using the Jews as symbols for humanity and rationalism to an attempted confrontation with Jewish nationalism. To be sure, this was **confrontation** and not acceptance, and yet the change from 1932 to 1945 is quite obvious.

This chronicle of LF's changing attitude towards Zionism reflects his precarious, deteriorating personal state of affairs, as affected by the Third Reich's consolidation of power; it was manifested in Josephus's changes in outlook through the various editions and installments of the trilogy. We can see the evolution from the rosy optimism of Josephus, aspiring to be the "citizen of the world"-- the bridge between Roman drive and technological mastery and Jewish/Oriental contemplative wisdom-- to Josephus's realization that his exalted appraisal of the Jews' value in brokering this marriage was appreciated neither by the Romans nor by his fellow Jews; in fact, Josephus concludes that perhaps the resurgent nationalism and newborn resistance in his native Judaea was the only recourse, as desperate and unpromising as it might seem.

Thus we find a transformation of the "East~West problematic" (Levesque, Paul, "Mapping the Other: Lion Feuchtwanger's Topographies of the Orient" *The German Quarterly*, Spring, 1998. pp. 145-165) found in *Jud Suess* as it makes its way through the close to 15 year history of the writing of the *Josephus* novels, a time span which saw LF radically changing his ideas in the face of rapidly changing historical events.

After the publication and large success of *der Juedische krieg*, in 1932, and while he was editing the manuscript of *die Sohne*, the second installment, LF wrote a piece on the optimal approach to writing an artistically successful historical novel in which he alludes specifically to the Josephus project:

One topic that has deeply moved me as long as I can remember is the conflict between nationalism and internationalism in the heart of a single individual. If I were to tackle this theme in the form of a contemporary novel, I fear my presentation might be overshadowed and contaminated by personal grudges and resentment. I chose therefore to transplant this conflict into the soul of a man, the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, who, it appeared to

me, had experienced it in the same way as so many do today, with the difference that he did so 1860 years ago.

I hope I have retained the peace of mind to judge things fairly; still I believe I can do a convincing job of depicting the persons who - 1870 years ago - put the torch to various central buildings in Nero's Rome, poor, foolish implements of the feudalists and militarists of their day that they were, and indeed do a more convincing job of it than I could of describing the people who two years ago set fire to the Reichstag in Berlin, poor, foolish tools that they were of the feudalists and militarists of our own era.

(*The Purpose of the Historical Novel* by Lion Feuchtwanger (translated by John Ahouse on : <http://libguides.usc.edu/feuchtwanger>), "*Vom Sinn des historischen Romans*," *Das Neue Tage-Buch*, 1935 )

LF reconstructed the second volume of *Flavius Josephus* in France and added a third one. In these books, the protagonist experiences drastic turns in his life. These changes, as Domitian's despotism and secret police destroy Josephus's family, are a reflection of the sharp reversal of LF's own fortunes. Of course LF was, of necessity, using poetic license to extrapolate and invent occurrences during a period comprising a blank page in Josephus personal odyssey, since Josephus' own record of his life (*Vita*) ends with his arrival in Rome around AD 72 or 73.

The first volume of the trilogy ended with Flavius Josephus rejecting armed resistance. The second volume echoes the experiences of LF's initial years in exile and his commitment to a movement of literati with a strong Marxist "popular front" element. The last volume provides a stark contrast to the principles illustrated in the first volume. Written in the precarious situation of half-imprisonment in the American consulate in Marseille, parallels between the Emperor Domitian and Hitler are unambiguous, though not as forthright as the Hitler avatars in *Erfolg* and *Der falsche Nero*. Domitian was shown as a rather conflicted individual in his own right, with the burden of being a God (here not depicted satirically) and an earthly ruler tearing him apart. The Flavius Josephus of the novel ultimately adheres to a radical position, endorsing openly the armed fight against dictatorship as a holy obligation to Yahweh to defend the faith.

LF's choice to use Josephus as the protagonist in his portrait of the history of the Jewish rebellion against the Roman occupation (*der Jüdische krieg; The Jewish War; Josephus*) in the second half of the first century AD is revealing. At a time when German Jewry was feeling the increasing pressure of racial anti-Semitism, LF could easily have taken as his topic the heroic aspects of the Jewish resistance against the Roman empire or focused on one of the unwavering Jewish leaders of the rebellion, such as Simon bar Gioras or John of Gischala, in order to strengthen the political resolve of his beleaguered coreligionists. Instead, Feuchtwanger concentrated on the Jewish historian Joseph, who, in his historical book titled *The Jewish War* (completed in the late 70s AD), as we know, put most of the blame on the various revolutionary factions of the Jewish populace, making their nationalist inspirations responsible for the course of events that led to the destruction of the Jewish Temple in 70 AD.

By focusing on Josephus's career, LF perhaps resisted the temptation to identify the Romans of the first century AD with the Germans of the 1930s, even if the second and third volumes of the Josephus trilogy establish some parallels between them. By essentially accepting the historical Flavius Josephus's (Roman) viewpoint, LFr made sure that his readers would concentrate on the philosophical content of



his book and not just on the victimization of the Jews. And by making the ostensible “traitor” Joseph and his development the crucial aspects of his novel, LF's Brechtian strategy (after the technique of his playwright friend) was to strip his protagonist of heroic qualities and thus center his readers' attention on the novel's ideas.

While LF follows the historian's account with regard to the main stages of the Jewish revolt from its first acts of resistance to the siege and destruction to the victory march in Rome, the main theme of the novel is Joseph's transformation from a staunch Jewish nationalist to a cosmopolitan citizen of the civilized world, transgressing national and ethnic identities. Recognizing nationalist politics as destructive and opposed to rationality, LF's Joseph becomes an early twentieth-century champion of the hybridization of “self” and “other”: through his Josephus, LF expresses the view that “It was important to let the good in oneself flow into others, the good of others into oneself”.

Right after the publication of the first book of the series, LF expressed similar views in nonfictional form. Rejecting the *Blut und Boden* nationalism in Germany, LF, in his essay “Nationalismus und Judentum” (1933), celebrated the universalistic principles of the Enlightenment. By distancing himself also from political Zionism in Palestine, the “bad” Jewish nationalism he calls a kind of “juedischer Hitlerei”, LF tries to rescue the spirituality inherent in a positive Jewish nationalism. And this “good” Jewish nationalism, he claims, has its origins in the historical catastrophe of the destruction of the Jewish Temple—a kind of blessing in disguise.

Here, I might also mention LF's thoughts about Rome and Judaea expressed in an article in the magazine *Europa*, as cited in a piece in the *Jewish Daily Bulletin* for June 26, 1934. In his article titled “Are We Moderns Barbarians?”, although the data was discouraging enough, LF opined that, the world should not despair, not to despair even for Germany, where the spirit of Goethe was only in abeyance, under the temporary heel of the barbarians. LF took a long view, back to the centuries of “the Roman Peace”. The *Bulletin's* introduction noted that, “after all, his knowledge is not derived from a last-minute text-book cramming. Lion Feuchtwanger, lest you forget, is the author of *Josephus* and he has more than a superficial awareness of the cost in blood and tears entailed by the march of the Roman legions through Palestine and the consequences of Titus's successful siege of Jerusalem.” But once Roman authority and Roman peace were established, LF assured his readers, there was an end to violence and disorder, bloodshed and persecution. There was a living principle in Roman law which has kept its fundamentals active to this day. The *Bulletin's* article goes on to say:

What was “wrong” with the Roman picture was that Rome had not “developed” the notions of militarism, nationalism and race. The original “Aryans” had only recently achieved an upright position and hadn't conceived either a Wagner or a Chamberlain.

Here is perhaps the most relevant passage in LF's article:

“The most amazing thing to us, however, is the fact that for the subjects of the Roman Empire the ideal of nationalism had just as little existence as militarism. We stand marveling before the fact that a region of the earth which nowadays needs forty-eight national languages then could get along on three highly developed languages. Race? That was a thing for which the Romans had not even a name. And nation, that was a faded echo from primeval ages, and even then a mere empty sound. During the Jewish war, for instance, a great part of Jews”more than there were in Judaea”were living in other regions of the Roman Empire. Never did the Roman government, at war with Judaea, think of extending its hostility to these other Jews. Throughout all these three first

centuries after Christ, the Roman government observed extraordinary tolerance toward all religions, nations, worldviews, races. Throughout this whole period we find members of the most diverse races and nations in the highest posts, even on the Imperial throne.”

When LF was driven into exile, *Der jüdische Krieg*, the first part of his *Josephus* cycle, was already published. Now, in completing the cycle, or at least so he thought, he took stock of it in light of the new situation:

'The novel "Josephus" was originally intended to contain only two parts. The second volume was sketched out to the end and a great part written in 1932, when the first was published. But when the National Socialists looted my house in Berlin in March 1933, they destroyed the manuscript of that final volume, as well as the historical material that was also there. To restore the lost part in its original form proved to be impossible. I had learned a great deal more about the theme of "Josephus"- Nationalism and world-citizenship - the material burst its earlier mould, and I was compelled to divide it into three volumes,' he wrote in a postscript to the British edition *The Jew of Rome: A Historical Romance The Second Volume of the Trilogy of Which Josephus was the First. Comprising The Writer, The Man, The Father, The Nationalist, and The Citizen of the World.* (Hutchinson & Co., Ltd., 1935).

Somewhat surprised at the success of this volume, LF wryly commented that the ultra-nationalist militants most likely thought that the title, *The Jewish War*, signified some kind of modern crusade by Christians against Jews and snapped them up before they realized they were a quite different proposition altogether.

As we've seen, LF's Josephus was born into an age when the Roman Empire, under Trajan, was to achieve its greatest expansion. The political and military superiority of Rome and the corresponding weakness of Judaea are always in Josephus's thoughts. However, it was in his first face-off with Rome that Josephus distinguished the spiritual superiority of the East over the West. His intellectual calculations were directed to an East-West rapport specifically inspired and nurtured by the superior, albeit esoteric, wisdom of the East and he was destined to be that movement's visionary.

In the course of his development, the so-called cosmopolitan ideal often seems to be merely an opportunistic strategy for the ambitious, vain Josephus. Only after his nationalistic ardor, as a member of a Zealot-type faction, the so-called Avengers of Israel, has been frustrated that this idealistic notion appears as a substitute possibility; it is this expedient that saves his life (as a would-be prophet) and gains him fame and honor as a writer. It is this calculating, self-seeking hubris that causes Josephus to cast off his loyal, doting Jewish wife, Mara, so he can win Roman citizenship and marry Dorion, the daughter of an Egyptian artist highly esteemed by the Romans.

The superficial mark of this new world-view is his assumption of the new, Romanized cognomen, "Flavius Josephus", an act which also marks the break with his Judaic past. As will be seen below the depiction of the fluctuating variants of the assorted psalms Josephus writes during critical turning points in his life indicate: the phases of his authorial career, disastrous relations with his wives and the terrible fates of his sons, the slide from being the darling of the emperor to persona non grata to marked man, his shaky relationship and friendly disputations with Justus of Tiberius (his alter ego) and John of Gischala, the latter who infuses the spiritual/moralistic narratives of Josephus with a *realpolitik* Marxist economic rationale, both notions facet of LF's own outlook. These phases and junctures in the

career of the fictional Josephus are evocative of the varying fortunes of LF first as an alienated Jewish author firmly ensconced in the German literary tradition yet, like his fellow Jewish authors, looking in from the outside, not quite Jewish enough yet not German enough, then as a acerbically witty enemy of the rising fascist xenophobic groups that were filling the vacuum in a politically disintegrating, though culturally vibrant, Weimar Germany, a socialist-Marxist pacifist provocateur, a refugee/exile from his homeland, a naïve cheeleader for Stalin's "socialism in one county", a target of the McCarthy witch-hunts of the 1950s, and an evolved, though lukewarm-hearted Zionist.

In the first chapter of his Josephus trilogy, LF reveals not only the work's vast theme, but announced through Joseph ben Matthias, still the priest of the Temple his philosophy. Josephus's first confrontation with Rome elicits the trend of thought that while the West could provide technology, organization and logic, all this could be learned. However what could not be learned was the visionary powers of the East—its holiness. Nation and God, man and God were indivisible there. Unlike the perceptible Greco-Roman deities, Jehovah was an invisible, immaterial God, incapable of being known. He, Joseph, possessed this arcane knowledge of the unknowable and was confident that he would fuse this non-rational consciousness with the learned technique and logic of the West. This was to change drastically throughout his hectic 70-years of life.

Josephus's changes of outlook at key crises of his life are roughly reflected through four psalms that he formulates in pondering his destiny after each.

Josephus's initial concept, that of the world citizen, is expressed in the first of four cardinal psalms appearing throughout the trilogy: *The Psalm of the World Citizen*. This was written during his courtship in Alexandria, after his defection to the Romans, while he was wooing the aloof Greco-Egyptian aristocrat Dorion, having callously divorced his adoring Judaeen/Jewish wife Mara. Dorion and her father, an artist who Vespasian ordered, against his will, to make a portrait of Josephus, have just haughtily showed their disdain for Josephus, who they regard as a brash, unworldly upstart. Determined more than ever to win the affection of Dorion, Josephus, resolves to bedazzle Rome with his fusion of East and West :

.....  
 Cast thyself free from thine anchor, saith Jehovah,  
 I love them not that dally in the harbor.  
 And an abomination to me are they that rot in sloth.  
 I have given feet to men to bear them over the earth,  
 And legs that they might run,  
 That they might not remain forever where they are, like a  
 tree rooted to its place.

.....  
 A slave is he who binds himself to a single country.  
 The kingdom that I promise y our, its name is not Zion.  
 It's name is the earth.  
 [Josephus, pp. 295-296]

LF thus juxtaposes Josephus's dogged pursuit of this urbane, sophisticated woman, who herself combines Greco-Roman know-how with the esoteric wisdom of the East (Egypt), with his quest to serve as the personification of a marriage between Judaeen spirituality and Roman scientific know-how. As the agent of this fusion, Josephus will increase his prestige and hopefully his esteem in the

eyes of the contemptuous Dorion.

It was written prior to the Nazi consolidation of power, while the German-Jewish intelligentsia, though vilified by increasingly strident German ultra-nationalist roughnecks, still thought of themselves as Germany's unacknowledged best and brightest whose cosmopolitan transnational *weltanschauung* would overcome the narrow parochialism of the right-wing groups.

The next of the autobiographical invocations, *The Psalm of the Self*, was composed in the aftermath of the tragic death of Josephus's young son (by Mara) Simeon. The young boy adored his father and embraces his Judaic roots, craving instruction in Jewish history and law. However, Josephus was at the time very preoccupied with trying to retain the love of Paulus, his son by Dorion, who just sued him for divorce. He has no time to teach Simeon, who so desperately wants to learn from his father. Paulus spurns his father's efforts to instill a reverence for Jewish learning in him and is firmly under the influence of his mother and his Greek tutor, who have taught him that the way of Judaism is a reversion to barbarism.

Meanwhile, Simeon, inspired by Josephus's descriptions of catapults he used while commanding rebels in Judaea, constructs a small working model in which he engages in mock battles with gentile boys, who taunt him with anti-Jewish slurs. One of the boys clandestinely substitutes a stone for the dough balls they normally use in their games and Simeon is fatally wounded. Josephus despairs of his barren efforts to achieve the East-West amalgamation of his early longing and realizes that this has only brought him grief instead of the prestige he sought.

Why art Thou so equivocal, Jehovah,  
Like a sign-post defaced by boys,  
With one arm missing and the other falsified  
So that the one surviving arm  
Points East and West together?

. . .

I have a suit against Thee, Jehovah,  
A valid suit at law,  
Joseph ben Matthias against Jehovah, that is my law suit.  
Why must I, being Joseph ben Mathias,  
Become also a Roman or a Jew or both together?  
I will be myself, I will be Joseph,  
As I was born out of my mother's body,  
And not a pawn between two peoples  
Forced to decide myself of the one side or the other.  
Out of my great dividedness, Jehovah,  
I cry to Thee:  
Let me be Me.  
Or cast Thou me back into the empty chaos  
From which Thou didst call me  
Into the light of this world.

[*The Jew of Rome*, pp. 290-291]

LF's composition of this piece roughly corresponds with the period of his exile among other

German expatriates on the French Riviera, before his confinement to the internment camps and his narrow escape from the advancing Wehrmacht troops. He has become disillusioned with his native country's embrace of barbarism and his deprivation of citizenship; in France, he has been thrown upon his own resources, cut off from the thriving intercultural milieu of Berlin. At this point he is still hopeful that socialism is the answer, though this expectation is not reflected in the Psalm. Meanwhile, he and his comrades in France are in a kind of limbo—stateless nomads, fending for themselves, rudderless ships. His inspirational trip to the Soviet Union and meeting with Stalin was still a few years in the future; thus his socialist aspirations are in limbo at this point.

The third psalm is drafted on the eve of Josephus's departure for Judaea to consult with the Jewish elders/scholars at the great university at Jabne and try to resolve his identity crisis. His son Paulus has slipped away and is lost to him, having decided on a career as a Roman soldier. Josephus has just had an extended discussion about the Mineans (Christians) with his alter-ego, Justus of Tiberius, who cynically has belittled their doctrine of resignation, turning inward, and non-resistance to brutality as non-human.

“No, no my dear fellow, don't expect anything from the narrow-chested doctrines of the Mineans. Their teaching is suited only to weaklings. It's easy to look forward to a sweet life beyond the grave that can be achieved by mere faith. The theory that one man has suffered for everybody, so that the others are set free from the duty to suffer: that's too comfortable for me. And the morality of the Mineans is just as unnaturally lofty as their creed is simple. . . If I had to choose between the doctors [i.e., the Torah scholars at Jabne] and the Mineans, then I would choose the doctors. Their narrow, petty nationalism is disgusting; but they don't surrender at any rate, they fight. ...Our task is to refuse to let ourselves be petrified by nationalism and at the same time not to lose ourselves in a watery hodge-podge. The doctors have not solved that problem, but the Mineans are still further from solving it.”

[*The Jew of Rome*, p. 431]

During the evening following this discussion, Josephus writes the *Psalm of the Three Parables*. He juxtaposes three symbols that might frame his self-identity. The first is Jehovah's command to be “the salt of His earth”. This is rejected for the reason that the grains of salt will dissolve and be lost in the great waters of the earth so that no trace would be left and their mission would have been in vain. He next yearns to be like the fire of the burning bush, that burns yet is not decreased or quenched but the flame is dangerous; even Moses burnt his lips when he grasped for the flames, resulting in his stammer.

Josephus settles upon the rainbow:

The shimmering rainbow may seem a foolish thing  
 When the sun breaks through the rain  
 Perhaps a joy for children and dreamers only.  
 And yet it was this bow in the heavens that Jehovah chose as a sign  
 of his covenant with flesh that shall die.  
 Let me be as a rainbow, Jehovah,  
 Quick to dissolve but ever new-born again,  
 Glittering with many hues and yet made of one light,  
 A bridge from Thy earth to Thy heaven,

Born of water and sun,  
 When sun and water mingle.  
 I will not be the salt  
 I cannot be the fire  
 Let me be a rainbow, Jehovah.  
 [ *The Jew of Rome*, pp. 432-433]

In the first volume, in his native Judaea, Josephus had had his fill of action and involvement and it had nearly cost him his life. In the vicinity of the Emperor Vespasian, whose ascent to the throne he had predicted, he still tasted the sweetness of power, but had become very distrustful of its alluring taste. During Titus's brief reign, he had witnessed the banishment of Berenice from Rome, after which Titus, to rid himself of the taint of his apparent submission to this Jewish incubus, has become estranged from Josephus and his Judaism. Hence, he disdains the oblivion of being “the salt of the earth” as Jehovah ordained (possibly the inward-facing contemplative life idealized by the Mineans), but eschews as well the dangerous eternal flame—which may represent the alluring yet dangerous power derived from close association with the Flavian emperors. Looking beyond the world of the novel, we can still see LF grappling with how to successfully amalgamate the disparate pull of socialist activism and Jewish meditative Torah study-- passivity. God has commanded his chosen people to be paragons of wisdom. “a light unto the Gentiles” in the winnowing of moral guidance from the Torah, yet the socialist or Marxist agenda demands vigorous participation in the worldwide class struggles. How to reconcile these apparently divergent tasks?

The fourth and final psalm, *The Psalm of Courage* was written just after the Emperor Domitian had been pressing Josephus on whether, as a professed scion of the House of David, from whence a Messiah will issue, according to Jewish tradition, he himself claims that inheritance and may thus either be the messiah or have borne a child who is. Domitian, who claims divinity, is acutely suspicious of any such assertion, as it threatens to displace him. He has been active in arresting and executing suspected Mineans and Jewish converts among his relatives and associates for their alleged treason, but this messianic prospect is deemed more dangerous. Josephus is stunned into speechlessness by the challenge, as Domitian has made pointed references to Josephus's son Matthias as a potential claimant to the title. Paulus, who has rejected his Jewish heritage altogether is not under suspicion, while Simeon is deceased, killed in a foolish accident. While Josephus ponders how to answer this accusatory question, he writes the *Psalm of Courage*. Josephus begins by praising valor in battle, but notes that the proximity of the soldier's comrades help to steel him and that none of the fighters believe that death will visit him personally. He next lauds the explorer/adventurer who seeks new lands and new reaches across continents and seas, but just as the moon pales with the rising of the sun, so the glory of the adventurer fades. However,

...  
 If a man offers life to gain gold, to gain might,  
 The price of the gamble is known;  
 It hovers before his eyes, it is as solid and he can weigh it.  
 But what is a word?  
 Therefore I say:  
 Hail to the man who takes death upon him,  
 That he may speak because his heart bids him.  
 Therefore I say:  
 Hail to the man who cannot be forced

To say what is not  
 For he takes it upon him, the hardest of all.  
 Clear-eyed in the sober light of noon,  
 Beckons to death and says to it: Come.  
 For a bodiless word he faces his death;  
 That if a falsehood, he may deny it,  
 That if truth, he may confess.  
 Hail to the man  
 Who for that faces ruin,  
 For his is the courage God most approves.

[*Josephus and the Emperor*, pp. 156-159]

This is a clear reference to Domitian, who has notoriously stifled free expression among his subjects. It portends the forthcoming decision of Josephus with respect to the demanded “confession.”

The following day, Josephus is summoned by Domitian who menacingly continues to exhort him to respond to the Messiah issue. At this point, Josephus grasps the nettle and asserts that he and his lineage are indeed descended from King David and thus likely candidates to be the expected Messiah. Clearly furious, Domitian pulls Josephus to him and whispers in his ear that he, Josephus, is a dangerous man.. He next declares that since Josephus's latest work, his *Universal History of the Jewish People* (i.e., *Antiquities*) was deemed to be an inferior work and therefore Josephus's bust is to be removed from the Temple of Peace, where the distinguished honorees of the empire are represented, and will be melted down to be used to make another bust of a more worthy recipient.

Some time later Josephus appears at a public reading of his *Universal History* and learns that the Emperor will attend. Domitian's wife, Lucia—a friend of Josephus and in whose care he has entrusted the raising of Matthias to secure his eventual citizenship-- will be present as well, and she warns Josephus that if he must read the portion about Herod, not to reach the section which describes the murder of his sons, for that would infuriate the Emperor as being a veiled reference to his own murders of relatives on suspicion of treason. Josephus presses ahead with his reading and, ignoring Lucia's exhortation, continues reading through the gory details of Herod's filicide. Not stopping at that, he then reads his *Psalm of Courage*. Domitian is clearly angered but he does not react, and leaves the proceedings without having words with Josephus.

Several weeks later, Josephus is summoned to dine at the palace with Domitian. The Emperor then requests him to read his *Psalm of Courage* to him again. Josephus begs off, saying that it obviously offends the Emperor, but Domitian insists. After the reading the Emperor cruelly toys with Josephus, inquiring about the health of Matthias. Bit by bit, Domitian reveals that Matthias met with a fatal accident on a yacht en route from Lucia's palace to Marseilles, and then lets it slip out that actually, it was no accident, but he had it arranged.

This psalm, written after World War II had been in progress and intimations about the ongoing genocide of the Jewish population of Europe were beginning to filter back is much easier to relate to events in LF's life and the state of affairs regarding the Jewish issue. But note that the courage referred to in the psalm does not advocate physical courage in battle—that is meeting evil with force. In fact, the courage of the combatant is held to be inferior relative to the courage to speak one's mind and

refuse to be compelled to speak falsehoods as well as to speak prohibited truth to power.

In this connection, it may seem odd that at the end of the concluding trilogy volume, *Josephus and the Emperor*, Josephus actually enters renewed armed struggle, in which he had been an active participant for most of the first volume of the trilogy, and thus the implications of the *Psalm of Courage* would appear to be invalid at that point. However, note that the so-called return to violent confrontation vis a vis oppression is arrived at incrementally and hesitantly. He simply goes to reconnect with his one-time antagonist but now good friend, John of Gischala, who has returned to his estates in Galilee, where new violence has erupted due to Jewish opposition to a new and onerous poll tax. Josephus is advised by Rabbi Gamaliel, the dean of the academy at Jabne, to secure a “passport” (safe conduct pass) at the governor's headquarters upon entering the country as there is heightened security in this zone of operations. On obtaining the pass, he was certain that he briefly glimpsed his son Paulus, now Roman military commander of the Galilee Front and de facto governor—though Lucius Quietus (for whom the so-called Quietus War—or Kitos Polemos—of some seven years after the novel's time frame was named ) was the nominal administrator. If so, the boy either didn't recognize him or simply ignored his father. Before setting out for John's farmlands, Josephus consulted with Drl Akibah, the same as was to be the spiritual mentor of Bar Kochba some 25 years hence. In the novel, Akibah is in his early 50s.

Akibah engages in a friendly, though adversarial, discussion with Josephus about the wisdom of premature Zealot (for they are still called that) military action. Akibah notes his agreeing to disagree with the faculty of the Jabne Academy (a kind of academic Sanhedrin) on the issue; Gamaliel urges patience, Akibah agrees but only for a limited time period. Meanwhile, as was the case 40 years earlier, a few hotheads on both sides couldn't be constrained and matters spiraled out of control.

Akibah urges Josephus to keep off the main roads, which are heavily patrolled, and take bypaths and rough tracks. Josephus, now 70 years old, does so but nonetheless is discovered by a Roman patrol when he kicks some rocks downhill. The legionaries ask for the password and Josephus is unable to give it. He produces his passport to no avail. He explains that he is trying to determine the welfare of his good friend John of Gischala—neither explanations nor the passport help. When the soldiers mention that standing orders from their commander Paulus Bassus require them to arrest as a spy any Jew not keeping to the main roads, who is not local and who doesn't give the correct response to the challenge. On hearing the name of his estranged son, Josephus tells them he is a friend of their commander and asks to be taken to him to prove it. The soldiers tell him that unfortunately they must get to the next outpost right away and cannot waste any time. To be lenient, they agree not to kill Josephus right away but to tie him behind a horse and move along at something between a walk and a slow gallop, and hopefully he can keep up the pace. If not, then he will likely not survive. Josephus keeps pace for a while, but eventually he falls to the ground and is dragged across rough terrain and torn up badly. The soldiers untie him and leave him in the shade to die. His wife Mara sends out to seek word of him as does John but he is never found. Just as with Moses, LF concludes, there will be no sepulcher to mark where his bones lay, but as with Moses, his sepulcher resides in his words for all posterity.