Zinovii Tolkatchev's "Jesus in Majdanek".
A Soviet-Jewish Artist Confronting the Holocaust*

by Mirjam Rajner

Zusammenfassung

Zinovii Shenderovich Tolkatchev (1903–1977), ein sowjetischer Künstler jüdischer Herkunft, kreierte 1945 eine eindrucksvolle Serie von fünf Bildern mit dem Titel "Jesus in Majdanek". Die Serie war der Höhepunkt von Tolkatchevs intensiver Auseinandersetzung mit den Erfahrungen, die er als Soldat der Roten Armee, während der Befreiung der Konzentrationslager Majdanek und Auschwitz gemacht hatte. Schockiert von dem dort Gesehenen, zeigt er Jesus als Lagerinsassen, der eine gestreifte Uniform trägt, die alle nur möglichen Diffamierungszeichen aufweist – den jüdischen gelben Stern, das rote Dreieck politischer Gefangener und die individuelle Gefangenennummer. Die numerische Tätowierung am Unterarm ist auch zu sehen. Die verschiedenen Abschnitte des Lagerlebens werden als die der traditionellen *Passion Christi* dargestellt. Während der Künstler die verschiedenen Phasen des Leidens Jesu kanonisch portraitiert, basiert sein künstlerisches Schaffen auf den der bekannten Malereien der europäischen Renaissance. Der Artikel platziert Tolkatchevs Bilderserie in einem breiteren kulturellen und visuellen Kontext, da er sowohl die Entwicklung des ‚historischen Jesu' typisch für das Denkbild des Europas des 19. Jahrhunderts und der Kunst des Russischem Realismus als auch den Einfluss der deutschen Avantgarde, untersucht. Dadurch bietet sich ein tiefsinnigeres Verstehen von Tolkatchevs Arbeit und ihrer universellen Botschaft.

Abstract

In 1945, Zinovii Shenderovich Tolkatchev (1903–1977), a Soviet artist of Jewish origin, created a striking series of five images entitled "Jesus in Majdanek". The series was the culmination of Tolkatchev's intensive preoccupation with the experience he, as a Red

Army soldier, endured upon taking part in liberation of the concentration camps Maj-danek and Auschwitz. Shocked by the actual sights he witnessed, he depicted Jesus as an actual camp inmate, wearing a striped uniform marked by every possible defamation sign – the Jewish yellow star, the red triangle of political prisoners, and the individual prison number, the numerical tattoo on his lower arm can also be seen. The different stages of camp life are portrayed as the traditional *Passion of Christ*. While showing the actual situations the artist based himself upon the well known European Renaissance paintings canonically depicting Jesus' suffering. The article places Tolkatchev's series in a broader cultural and visual context by exploring the development of the 'historical Jesus' in the 19th century European thought and Russian realist art, and by examining the impact of the German avant-garde. By doing so, a deeper understanding of the universal message Tolkatchev's works entail is offered.

1.   Introduction

At the beginning of July 1944 the Red Army liberated Majdanek, the concen-tration camp situated near Lublin, Poland. First conceived in October 1941 as a forced labor camp for Soviet prisoners of war, after the inception of Opera-tion Reinhard in 1942, aimed at the annihilation of Polish Jews, Majdanek became an extermination camp. The rapid onslaught of the Soviet army did not leave enough time for the camp's commanders to destroy the evidence, thus turning Majdanek into the "best preserved" concentration camp which presented the liberators with a detailed picture of the Nazi death machine.[1]

Zinovii Shenderovich Tolkatchev (1903–1977), a Soviet artist of Jewish origin serving in the Red Army, came with his unit to Sokolow, a townlet next to Majdanek.[2] Acting under the orders of the Political Department of the

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[1]   Wiśniewska, Anna; Rajca, Czesław: Majdanek, the Concentration Camp of Lublin. Translat-ed from the Polish by Anna Zagórska. Lublin 1999.
[2]   Zinovii Shenderovich Tolkatchev (1903–1977) was born in a Jewish agricultural settlement Shchedrin, Belarus. He received the artistic training in Kiev, at a Jewish artisan's school, and at VkHUTEMAS (The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops) in Moscow. As a member of the Young Communist League Tolkatchev studied at the Communist Institute in Kharkov and served in the Red Army. He later taught at the Institute of Fine Arts in Kiev. During the WWII Tolkatchev served as an official artist of the Red Army and joined Soviet forces in liberating Majdanek and Auschwitz. He captured this shattering experience in num-ber of art works. However, after the War the Soviet authorities denounced him and his art was declared defective. Only in the last decade of his life he was again recognized and his art exhibited and published.

First Ukrainian Front stationed at Lublin, he produced over the next thirty-five days about thirty works of art depicting the horrors he saw and learned about in the camp.[3] These works were the first account by an artist of Nazi atrocities, and Tolkatchev, using his previous experience with images depicting the Russian civil war (1921) and the German occupation (1941), created highly individualized, emotionally charged art works that immediately became identified as visual symbols associated with the Holocaust. Upon showing them to a member of the Polish-Soviet Nazi Crimes Investigation Commission, Tolkatchev was urged to complete the series prior to the opening of the trial of Majdanek's captured perpetrators which was planned to be held in Lublin in the autumn of 1944. While trying to follow the information provided by the camp's survivors at the time of its liberation, in the Majdanek series Tolkatchev showed scenes from the time it was still active, thus creating powerful artistic interpretations of human suffering. The artist's reminiscences of these first encounters appeared in print many years later, in 1967:

> "I stood a long time next to the crematorium that turned Russians and Jews, Poles and Ukrainians, Greeks and French into ashes – people of different nationalities, different ages, and different religions that had been brought here from all over occupied Europe."[4]

Although such an universalistic approach reflects Soviet policy, Tolkatchev must have been aware at the time he was working on his series that more than 50 percent of Majdanek's victims were Jews. Two of the works he created while stationed in Sokolow clearly express his identification with them and acknowledgment of their suffering. One of those was a highly symbolic painting "Taleskoten" (fig. 1), which is the Yiddish pronunciation of a garment – *tallit katan* – that male religious Jews are obliged to wear under their clothing. It is shown here as fluttering in the wind, like a lonely flag caught on the camp's barbed wire. By depicting this clearly religious artifact usually worn on a person's body – which is missing here – Tolkatchev powerfully presented the loss and tragedy that had befallen the Jews.[5]

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[3]   Private Tolkatchev at the Gates of Hell. Majdanek and Auschwitz Liberated. Testimony of an Artist [exhibition catalogue]. Ed. by Yehudit Shendar. Jerusalem 2005, pp. 14–37.

[4]   Quoted in: Muravin, G.: Dvoe iz mnogykh tysyach. Moscow 1967, p. 101.

[5]   The other work, "November 3, 1943", shows two orphaned children left among bodies of killed victims. The title of this work refers to the first day of the German operation known as the "Harvest Festival", which marked the end of Operation Reinhard, and which was

Fig. 1: Zinovii Tolkatchev, „Taleskoten“, 1944, gouache, charcoal and crayon on paper, 47,5 x 58,9 cm, collection of the Yad Vashem Museum, Jerusalem, Gift of Sigmund A. Rolat, New York, in memory of his parents Henryk and Mania, who perished in the Holocaust, image no. 5357/15.

The Majdanek series was completed and exhibited at the Lublin Art Museum just before the opening of the trial of Majdanek's commanders, which began on 27 November 1944. The exhibition reverberated throughout Poland, was extensively reviewed in the press, and during the following year

intended to eliminate the last Jews in a number of camps, including Majdanek. Between 17,000 and 18,000 Jews were killed there in a single day. See Kranz, Tomasz: Das Konzentrationslager Majdanek und die "Aktion Reinhardt". In: "Aktion Reinhardt". Der Völkermord an den Juden im Generalgouvernement, 1941–1944. Ed. by Bogdan Musiał. Osnabrück 2004, pp. 233–255. For an analysis of Tolkatchev's Holocaust art, especially the albums "The Shetl, Auschwitz", and "The Flowers of Auschwitz", see my forthcoming article: From "The Shetl" (1939–1946) to "The Flowers of Auschwitz" (1945–46) and Back. The Creation, Reception, and Destiny of Zinovii Tolkatchev's Art. In: Images of Rupture between the East and the West. The Iconography of Auschwitz and Hiroshima in the Arts and Literature of Eastern Europe. Ed by Urs Heftrich, Robert Jacobs et al. Cologne 2015.

was shown in a number of Polish towns and cities. Hundreds of thousands saw it. In February 1945 the first thoughtfully designed "Majdanek" album was published in Warsaw in an edition of 6,000 copies. The introductory texts were written in Polish, Russian, English, and French, and the Polish Government sent these albums to the heads of the Allied states, government ministers, and military officers.[6]

However, the Majdanek experience was only an introduction to what would happen on 27 January 1945, when Tolkatchev, now accompanying the Polish-Soviet Nazi Crimes Investigation Commission, arrived at Auschwitz only hours after the liberation of the camp by the Red Army.[7] Although the Nazis had emptied the camp of its prisoners and destroyed far more of the death machine than they had at Majdanek, the camp's size and sites were much more devastating. Along with the bodies of the dead, there were more than 7,000 living prisoners, most of them sick and in a state of collapse.[8] Arriving without art supplies and lacking the seclusion of Sokolow, Tolkatchev began to document on the spot what he saw and heard. In the camp's former headquarters he found a supply of paper – official stationery with printed letterheads – and used them for his pencil-drawn testimonies.

It is in the same year, following his encounter with the atrocities of Auschwitz, that he created a highly moving series entitled "Jesus in Majdanek" which, as in the case of his "Taleskoten", uses religious imagery to respond to the human catastrophe he witnessed. Comprised of five works, the series shows Jesus as a camp inmate suffering through all the stages of humiliation, stigmatization, hard work, and death, which are depicted in such a manner that they recall the stages of Christ's Passion.[9] In one of the scenes, offering a striking version of a traditional 'Ecce Homo' image, Jesus, wearing a prisoner's striped garb, is marked by every possible sign of defamation – he is a

6   Private Tolkatchev, ed. Shendar, p. 6; Tołkaczew, Zinovij: Majdanek: wystawa w Sukiennicach [exhibition catalogue]. Cracow 1945.
7   Private Tolkatchev, ed. Shendar, pp. 6–7, 38.
8   Strzelecki, Andrzej: "Liberation," Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau. Available at: http://en.auschwitz.org/h/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=16&Itemid= 15&limit=1&limitstart=6 (accessed June 2014).
9   I would like to thank to Mrs. Anel Tolkacheva-Shield, the artist's daughter, for kindly granting me permission to publish Zinovii Tolkatchev's series „Jesus in Majdanek," currently on loan at the Majdanek State Museum, Lublin, Poland.

Jew, a Pole, a Russian, and a political prisoner with his arm bearing a tattooed number (fig. 2).[10]

Tolkatchev was not alone in using the image of Christ and his suffering to respond to the Holocaust. Ziva Amishai-Maisels showed in her pioneering work on Holocaust art how turning to Jesus, and specifically Jesus as a Jewish victim, appeared in a number of artists' works, of which Marc Chagall's "White Crucifxion" of 1938 is an early and well known example.[11] Moreover, she has shown how Jesus, presented as a historical character, was already used by nineteenth century Jewish artists as a comment on Jewish destiny and Jewish-Christian relations.[12] What is striking about Tolkatchev's series "Jesus in Majdanek" is that he created a modern Passion as a Soviet Communist artist. With this article I hope to offer some insights, sources, and parallels of this unusual choice for an atheist Jew such as Tolkatchev.

2. Historical Jesus in Nineteenth-century Art: The Russian Connection

In the opening pages of his recently published book dealing with the nineteenth-century quest for a historical Jesus, Norwegian theologian Halvor Moxnes links the search for a historical presentation of Jesus Christ with the expression of modern identities. The question 'who was Jesus' always relates, he claims, to the existential question 'who am I/who are we,' referring not only to religious, but also to social, political, and national identities.[13] The development of the nineteenth century's historical Jesus studies, i. e., the exploration

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[10]   It is important to note that, although this series was created following his encounter with Auschwitz – it adds the tattoo used in that camp to Christ's arm – Tolkatchev titled it "Jesus in Majdanek" and not "Jesus in Auschwitz." For him, the first and strongest shock he experienced was the encounter with Majdanek. His private writings of the time, preserved by his family, show that it was this encounter that created the feeling of inability to comprehend the scope of the disaster, which he saw as an abyss dividing human history into the periods before and after Majdanek. See Sklyarenko, Galina: Zinovii Tolkachov. Khudozhnik i iogo chas. In: Zinovii Tolkachov, tvori z muzeinikh ta privatnikh zbirok. Album. Kiev 2005, p. 28.

[11]   Amishai-Maisels, Ziva: Depiction and Interpretation. The Influence of the Holocaust on the Visual Arts. Oxford 1993, esp. ch. 3, "The Crucified Jew," pp. 178–197. Chagall's "White Crucifixion" is presently at the Art Institute of Chicago, Inv. No. 1946.925; see http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/59426.

[12]   Amishai-Maisels, Ziva: The Jewish Jesus, in Journal of Jewish Art 9 (1982), pp. 84–104; idem: Origins of the Jewish Jesus, in Complex Identities. Jewish Consciousness and Modern Art. Ed. by Matthew Baigell and Milly Heyd. New Brunswick, NJ 2001, pp. 51–86.

[13]   Moxnes, Halvor: Jesus and the Rise of Nationalism. A New Quest for the Nineteenth-Century Historical Jesus. London and New York 2012, pp. 1–16.

Fig. 2: Zinovii Tolkatchev, "Ecce Homo" (from the series "Jesus in Majdanek"), 1945, gouache, charcoal and crayon on paper, 100 x 75 cm, © Anel Tolkatcheva-Shield, on permanent loan at The State Museum at Majdanek, Lublin.

of Jesus as a historical figure living and active in a specific period of time and a specific geographical area, paralleled the rise of nationalism and the formation of modern nation states and their expansion through colonialism. While the old system preferred a dogmatic image of a celestial Jesus as ruler of the church and a model for European monarchs as rulers of their worldly empires, the changes resulting from the French Revolution stressed the need for a new, human Jesus. This need became even more pronounced as a result of ongoing dramatic social and economic changes – urbanization, new relationships between social classes, changes in public morality and gender roles. However, although those changes included a new, critical attitude towards religion, religious beliefs and Christian morality were still important and the human Jesus was now viewed as a model for humanity, a symbol for individuals and for people.[14] A number of books written in the course of the nineteenth century,

[14]   Ibid.

primarily by Christian theologians and scholars of Christianity, explored this
new approach. They were biographies of Jesus' life that enabled a modern
reader to conceive of Jesus as a human being, envision the land and the society
in which he lived, and identify with them by transferring them to his or her
own time, nationality, and country. While German authors were the first to
publish historical reconstructions of Jesus' life, the most popular (and most
often criticized) version was the one written by the French Orientalist Ernest
Renan, which was translated into several European languages immediately
after its publication in Paris in 1863.[15]

Contemporary images in modern art that identify with such a new human
Jesus clearly follow this trend. The reforms Jesus introduced, his sacrifice for
the cause, and the suffering and martyrdom characterizing his life and Passion
became models for modern reformers, for *their* sacrifice and *their* suffering.
Among the earliest examples of art which use images of Jesus' death and his
sacrifice for the welfare of humanity as a metaphor for contemporary politi-
cal events is probably Jacques-Louis David's famous painting "The Death of
Marat" (1793). Although Jean-Paul Marat, the murdered French revolutionary
leader, is shown in a contemporary setting – in his own bathroom, his lifeless
right arm and head hanging to the right, as well as the bleeding cut on the
upper right of his chest – his mortal wound is clearly reminiscent of images
of the Pietà, especially Michelangelo's famous interpretation. The traditional
Christian attributes draw a clear parallel between the dead Christ and – in the
eyes of supporters of the French Revolution such as David – their martyred
political leader.[16]

Another well-known example is Francisco Goya's famous "The Third of
May, 1808, or The Executions on Prícipe Pío Hill" (1814). Goya, passion-
ately siding with his fellow citizens in their revolt against the occupying forces
of Napoleon's army, shows a captured fighter in his last moments before
being shot by a firing squad, with his raised arms recalling a crucifixion. His

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[15]   Ibid., p. 4. The earliest critical review of the nineteenth-century Jesus studies was Schweitzer,
        Albert: Von Reimarus zu Werde. Eine Geschichte der Leben Jesu Forschung. Tübingen 1906.
[16]   Vaughan, William: Terror and the *Tabula Rasa*-David's Marat in Pictorial Context. In: Jacques-
        Louis David's Marat. Ed. by William Vaughan and Helen Weston. New York 2000, pp. 83,
        92. "The Death of Marat" is currently at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, inv.
        no. 3260. For the image see http://www.fine-arts-museum.be/fr/les-musees/musee-mod-
        ern-museum (accessed June 2014).

kneeling posture and the wound on his right palm, recalling stigmata, clearly draw upon Christian iconography. Robert Hughes compares the painting to an altarpiece dedicated to the "religion of patriotism."[17] By contrast, in his "Dead Christ with Angels" – painted in 1864, a year after Renan published his influential "Life of Jesus" – Edouard Manet, an admirer of Goya, distanced himself from the heroic and patriotic sacrifice and underlined the suffering of a humble, human being.[18] Exhibited at the Parisian Salon of 1864, the painting was attacked by the critics who condemned it for "a lack of decorum." The stark realism of Christ's "cadaverous body" and "the seemingly human angels" were also censured: the critics argued that the painting completely lacked any sense of spirituality, and the figure of the battered Christ was said to more closely resemble "the body of a dead coal miner than the son of God".[19] However, Manet's worst 'crime' was the fact that he painted Christ's wound on the left side of his chest and not, traditionally, on the right. Although apparently done by mistake, Manet decided not to correct it. By switching the sides he broke with a long line of established Christian iconography and omitted one of Christ's traditional attributes: the right side of his body, symbolizing his righteousness, was replaced by the left, turning him into an ordinary wounded and dead mortal human being.

About the same time, Russian artists also began to experiment with modern images of Jesus. In the wake of tremendous socio-political changes introduced by Alexander II's 1861 reforms, primarily the liberation of the serfs, Russian intellectuals, faced with the misery of this mass of people who were now free but illiterate, impoverished, and unemployed, underwent intense soul-searching. Questions of morality, ethics, and one's conscience became major issues in Russian philosophy, literature and arts in the 1860s, culminating in the *Narodniki* (Populist) movement. Not surprisingly, Renan's "Life of

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[17] Hughes, Robert: Goya. London 2003, pp. 313–317. Goya's "The Third of May, 1808" is currently at the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid, inv. no. P00749. For the image see https://www.museodelprado.es/visita-el-museo/15–obras-maestras/ficha-obra/obra/el-3–de-mayo-de-1808–en-madrid-los-fusilamientos-en-la-montana-del-principe-pio/ (accessed June 2014).

[18] The painting is presently at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. no. 29.100.51. For the image see http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search/436950 (accessed June 2014).

[19] La Vie Parisienne, 5 May 1864. Quoted in: Hanson, Anne Coffin: Manet and the Modern Tradition. New Haven and London 1977, p. 106, n. 224.

Jesus", translated into Russian as early as 1864, inspired leading authors such as Lev Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoyevski as well as artists like Ivan Kramskoi and Vassily Polenov.[20] Similar to Manet, Kramskoi, himself a rebel against the conservative Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg and the founder of an independent art commune, set out to create his own Russian Jesus as a metaphor for his people's suffering.[21] In the mid-1860s, Kramskoi – inspired by the new social awareness and the search for a human Christ – started work on a painting based upon the New Testament passage that describes Jesus being tempted by the devil in the desert, after he had withdrawn there in order to fast and contemplate (Matthew 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13). However, instead of the traditional depictions of the dialogue between Jesus and the devil, Kramskoi created a powerful image of a lonesome Christ sitting on a rock, amid a desolate, stony landscape, detached from his surroundings and isolated in his own thoughts and inner being (fig. 3). His hands, folded in a gesture of uncertainty that suggests inner struggle, express a human attempt to come to terms with difficult moral questions: 'Where to turn? What is the right way?' In a letter written to his friend the writer Vsevolod M. Garshin in 1878, six years after Kramskoi had completed and exhibited his "Christ in the Desert", the artist explained that he did not base his image of Christ on either Russian Orthodox models or Western art, but rather – as a true realist – found his model in everyday life. Kramskoi's starting point was a character taken from life, an aged Russian peasant that the artist saw sitting motionless on a rock for hours, immersed in his own world. While observing him, he felt that it was exactly this simple man pondering his troubles who reflected all of Russia's

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[20] Renan, Ernest: Zhizn Isusa. S frantsuzkago I. Monakov. Dresden 1864. See also Bailey, Heather: Orthodoxy, Modernity, and Authenticity. The Reception of Ernest Renan's 'Life of Jesus' in Russia. Newcastle, UK 2008. For the theme of Jesus in the works of nineteenth-century Russian artists, see Lang, Walther K.: The 'Atheism' of Jesus in Russian Art. Representations of Christ by Ivan Kramskoy, Vasily Polenov, and Nikolai Ge. Translated from German by Sara Kane. In: Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide, E-Journal of Nineteenth Century Visual Culture 2, no. 3 (Autumn 2003) http://www.webcitation.org/6H9yQqadO (accessed June 2014).

[21] Kramskoi's artists' commune developed into the Wanderers movement (Rus. Peredvizhniki), a society of Russian artists who initially hoped to educate people and bring about social changes by depicting socially aware scenes in a realist style. See Valkenier, Elizabeth Kridl: Russian Realist Art. The State and Society. The Peredvizhniki and their Tradition. Ann Arbor 1977.

Fig. 3: Ivan Kramskoi, "Christ in the Desert", 1872, oil on canvas, 180 x 210 cm,
The State Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

pain. Kramskoi realized that this peasant, as a symbol of his people's suffering,
could serve as a model for a Russian Christ.[22]

Although Kramskoi's revolutionary approach was the object of criticism,
and there were even rumors about his possible heresy, the painting was not
repressed.[23] Actually, already in 1871 the Academy of Arts in St Petersburg set
as an obligatory diploma theme for its students a scene from the life of Jesus
showing him raising from the dead the daughter of Jairus, the Capernaum
synagogue caretaker (Matt 9:18–23; Mark 5:22–35; Luke 8:40–49). Although

[22]   The letter is quoted in Ivan Nikolaevich Kramskoi, 1837–1887. Vystavka proizvedenii k 150–
      letiyu so dnya rozhdeniya. Ed. Yan V. Bruk. Moscow 1988, p. 76. See also Rajner, Mirjam:
      Chagall's Jew in Bright Red. In: Ars Judaica 4 (2008), p. 70 and figs. 6–7.
[23]   Lang: The 'Atheism' of Jesus in Russian Art.

the theme stressed Jesus Christ's divine nature and his ability to perform mira-
cles (rather than his human traits), Ilya Repin and Vassily Polenov – both soon
to become leading Russian Realist artists – used it in their diploma works pri-
marily to elaborate Christ's oriental, Middle-Eastern surroundings. Thus, both
paintings included in the depiction of Jairus' home numerous details such as
a Turkish table, oriental carpets, and striped, colorful clothes. Moreover, in
order to stress the 'Jewishness' of this home, both Repin and Polenov added
a sign on the wall inscribed with the Hebrew word *mizrah* (East), customar-
ily hung in Jewish traditional homes on the wall facing Jerusalem to indicate
to the members of the household towards which direction they should turn
when praying. Repin also depicted a lighted three-branch candelabra, clearly
reminiscent of the Jerusalem Temple's seven-branched *menorah*.[24]

Such depictions of Christ's 'authentic surroundings' derived from Renan's
'orientalization' of Jesus' life. Like Renan, who wrote his "Life of Jesus" while
traveling in 1860–61 through Ottoman Syria and Palestine, using his encoun-
ter with the actual geography and local Arab population to construct the set-
ting for Jesus' biography,[25] Polenov would eventually come to do so something
similar. Already in 1873 he began to plan his monumental painting "Christ and
the Woman Taken in Adultery" which he would complete only in 1887 after
traveling on several occasions through Greece, the Middle East, and Pales-
tine from 1881–82 onwards.[26] A number of preparatory sketches and paintings
depicting local landscapes and people – Bedouins, Arabs, and Jews – led to a
series of works representing the life of Jesus. Among the better known are
"On the Lake of Gennesaret" of 1888, showing Jesus dressed as a contempo-
rary Bedouin standing on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and "Dreams(on the
Rocks)" of 1894, depicting the same character sitting alone in a rocky landscape.
The latter work clearly alludes to Kramskoi's painting, but unlike his expresses
an ethnographic interest, rather than raising philosophical and moral issues.

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[24]   For the paintings by Repin and Polenov, "Jesus Raising Jairus and Daughter from the Dead"
       respectively, see: http://www.wikiart.org/en/ilya-repin/raising-of-jairus-daughter-1871 and
       http://www.wikiart.org/en/vasily-polenov/ressurection-of-jairus-daughter-1871 (both ac-
       cessed June 2014).
[25]   See the sub-chapter "Life of Jesus as Travel Writing and Biography" relating to Renan's book,
       in Moxnes: Jesus and the Rise of Nationalism, pp. 125–127.
[26]   Polenov's final version of "Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery", 1886–1887 is present-
       ly at the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow, see: http://www.abcgallery.com/P/polenov/polenov31.
       html (accessed June 2014).

Polenov's 'oriental' Christ was even more problematic than Kramskoi's image of a suffering human being.[27] It raised the tension between the historical Christ's Semitic, Jewish origin and the Christian faith that had developed from his teaching. Renan solved this by introducing a racial dimension and relating to Christ as to an Aryan who distanced himself with his teaching and life from the "lowly, amoral oriental Semites."[28] Polenov, on the other hand, in the spirit of social criticism and the search for higher ethics and morals, saw the religious establishment of his own day as a travesty of Christ's original idealism. In a letter to his colleague, the Russian artist Viktor Vasnetsov, he wrote: "… for me Christ and his ministry are one thing, but contemporary orthodoxy and its teaching are something else entirely; the one is love and forgiveness, the other… is far removed from it."[29]

It was this controversy between Christ's Jewish origin and Christianity's distancing itself from and often animosity towards Judaism that led Jewish thinkers interested in Second Temple Judaism to also relate to the nineteenth century 'historical' Jesus and present him as law-abiding Jew. Among the most important were the German-Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz in his "History of the Jews" (1853–1875), and Abraham Geiger, the German-Jewish scholar and reform rabbi, who in his innovative "Judaism and its History" (1864) redefined Jesus as a Pharisee and a liberalizer of Judaism. It was precisely in early Christianity that Geiger ultimately saw a betrayal of Jesus' Jewish message.[30]

It is probably no coincidence that the first Jewish artist who interpreted a historical Jesus as an Oriental Jew was the Russian-Jewish artist Mark Antokolskii, whose 1873–78 sculpture can be understood as a contemporary response

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[27] On the theme of Christ in Polenov's work see Zakharenkova, Lyubov' Ivanovna: Evangel'skaya tema v tvorchestve Polenova. In: Polenov i russkaya khudozhestvennaya ku'ltura vtoroi poloviny XIX – pervoi chetverti XX veka. Ed. by Eleonora Viktorevna Paston. Moscow and St Petersburg 2001, pp. 49–56.

[28] Renan wrote: "One of the principal defects of the Jewish race is its harshness in controversy, and the abusive tone that it always infuses into. There never were in the world such bitter quarrels as those of the Jews among themselves. It is the faculty of nice discernment that makes the polished and moderate man. Now the lack of this faculty is one of the most constant features of the Semitic mind." See Renan, Ernest: "The Life of Jesus". New York 1927, p. 297. For a discussion of Renan and his Aryan Jesus see Heschel, Susannah: Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus. Chicago and London 1998, pp. 155–158.

[29] Vasily Polenov to Viktor Vasnetsov, 8 Jan. 1888 In: Polenov, Vasily Dmitrievich. Pis'ma, dnevniki, vospominaniya. Ed. by Yekaterina Vasilevna Sakharova. Moscow 1950, letter no. 214, p. 243.

[30] Heschel: Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus, pp. 127–129.

Fig. 4: Mark Antokolskii, "Ecce
Homo" ("Christ before the People"),
1873–1878, bronze, 195 x 71 x 63 cm,
The State Russian Museum,
St. Petersburg, Inv. no. CK-452.

to the exploration of the theme by his Russian colleagues – Kramskoi,
Polenov, and Repin. As they strived to create a human, national Jesus, so did
Antokolskii. His "Ecce Homo" or "Christ before the People" (fig. 4) shows
Jesus captured and tied by a rope at the moment he was presented to the
crowd, while Pontius Pilate uttered his famous words "Behold the man" (John
19:5). However, Antokolsii's Jesus (like that of Kramskoi and Polenov) does
not follow the traditional Western iconography depicting a scourged, half-na-
ked, and vulnerable Christ with a wreath of thorns on his head, moments
before the crucifixion, but a thoughtful and dignified Isaiah, as Antokolskii
called him, dressed in striped Bedouin garb, wearing a skullcap. Nevertheless,
in contrast to his Russian colleagues, Antokolskii as a Jew had no doubts about
Christ's ethnicity. While responding to the criticism and explaining his motifs,
Antokolskii stressed not only the corruption of the Christianity that "acts in
the name of Christ – against Christ", but also the fact that Christ's Jewish
origins draw the two sides – Jews and Christians – closer.[31]

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[31]   The marble sculpture produced in 1876 is presently at The State Tretyakov Gallery in Mos-
        cow, http://www.tretyakovgallery.ru/en/collection/_show/image/_id/3075 (accessed June

3.   Zinovii Tolkatchev: A Soviet-Jewish Artist

Under the Soviets any form of religion was suppressed. The new society preached atheism; religion was, to paraphrase Karl Marx, considered the "opium of the people". One form of re-educating the masses was the establishment of the so-called anti-religious museums where artifacts and art works were used to "unmask the myth of Christ, demonstrate the reactionary nature of the ideological basis of Christianity, and more generally disprove the theory of spiritual revelation."[32] In the late 1950s, American author and scholar of religion Marcus Bach described images of Christ shown in the exhibit of Leningrad's Kazan Cathedral, which from 1932 housed the Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism: "There was the painting of Christ the oppressor; Christ the driver of the Horses of the Apocalypse grinding people under their hooves; and Christ the 'Jewish Fortune-teller'."[33] On the other hand, the Wanderers, due to their socially aware themes and realist style, were especially popular in the Soviet period and were considered to be the natural predecessors of Socialist Realism.[34] This explains then why Antokolskii's "Christ before the People" was interpreted as a moral-philosophical, ethical, and socially aware work according to which Jesus appeared as a "reformer, who stood against the aristocracy of the Pharisees and Sadducees and their injustices, and fought for justice, fraternity and freedom of the people…" The statues were shown at The Russian Museum in Leningrad (the bronze copy) and the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow (the marble version).[35] Similar Soviet rhetoric stressing the use of Christ's image and the New Testament 'myth' in

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2014). Antokolsky created clay and plaster models in 1873 and 1874, and a bronze copy in 1878. See Kuznetsova, Era Vasilevna.: M.M. Antokolskii, zhizn i tvorchestvo. Moscow 1989, figs. 35, 36, and 39. For different interpretations of Antokolsky's Jesus sculpture, stressing either its Jewish or its universal message, see Amishai-Maisels: The Jewish Jesus, pp. 93–96; Rajner, Mirjam: The Awakening of Jewish National Art in Russia. In: Jewish Art 16 (1990–91), pp. 112–114; Litvak, Olga: Rome and Jerusalem: The Figure of Jesus in the Creation of Mark Antokol'skii. In: The Art of Being Jewish in Modern Times. Ed. by Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett and Jonathan Karp. Philadelphia 2008, pp. 228–254; Glants, Musya. Where is My Home? The Art and Life of the Russian Jewish Sculptor Mark Antokolsky. 1843–1902. Plymouth, UK 2010, pp. 177–184.

[32] Elliot, Mark: The Leningrad Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism. In: Religion in Communist Lands 11, no. 2 (1983), p. 124.

[33] From Bach, Marcus: God and the Soviets (1958), quoted in Elliot: The Leningrad Museum, p. 126.

[34] Valkenier: Russian Realist Art, pp. 165–193.

[35] Kuznetsova, Era Vasilevna.: M.M. Antokolskii, pp. 305–306.

order to underline the Russian people's suffering under the Tsars was ascribed to Kramskoi's "Christ in the Desert", also kept in the Tretyakov Gallery.[36]

Zinovii Tolkatchev's artistic education most probably brought him in contact with the grand masters of the Russian Realist School; however, developing during the 1920s he absorbed other influences as well. Tolkatchev was, as noted, born in 1903 in Shchedrin, a small town in the province of Minsk (present-day Belarus), near Bobruisk. Shchedrin was founded in the early 1840s as a Jewish agricultural colony. In 1897 it numbered more than 4,000 Jews who comprised 95 percent of the town's population.[37] With the decline of the timber business in the area, many left town, as did the Tolkatchev family, who moved to Kiev.[38] There, according to excerpts from an autobiographical text published in 1933, Tolkatchev briefly studied at a Jewish artisan's school and became an apprentice to a signboard painter. [39] During the Revolution and the Civil War in Ukraine, the young Tolkatchev reacted to the bloodshed in his works of art. Soon thereafter he began to tread the path of a successful Bolshevik artist, and as a member of the "working youth" organization, and later the Communist Party, he created propaganda posters and painted murals. His art education included studying at the famous VkHUTEMAS, The Higher State Artistic and Technical Workshops in Moscow, as well as in Kharkov, where he created AGIT-PROP art. Inspired by his 1925–1927 service in the Red Army's artillery as a machine-gunner, he created a series of lithographs entitled "The Red Army", stressing its heroic role as a protector of the people. From 1925 Tolkatchev began to participate regularly in Soviet art exhibitions, and in the early 1930s was appointed professor in the Faculty of Graphics of the Kiev Art Institute.

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[36] Stasov, Vladimir Vasilevich: Izbrannye sochineniya. Vol. 2, 1937, p. 177, quoted in Bolshaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya. Ed. by Vavilov. Vol. 2. Moscow 1950, pp. 523–524. For Kramskoi's letters, also published in 1937, and the discussion of his "Christ in the Desert" see: ibid. Vol. 23. Moscow 1953, pp. 207–208. Vladimir Vasilevich Stasov (1824–1906), the famous Russian man of letters, art critic, spokesman of the Wanderers movement, and Antokolskii's personal friend, originally published the artist's extensive correspondence in 1905: Antokolskii, Mark Matveevich: Ego zhizn, tvoreniya, pis'ma i stat'i. Ed. by Vladimir Vasilevich Stasov. St Peterburg 1905. The 1937 publication includes a selection from it.

[37] Slutsky, Yehuda. and Spector, Shmuel.: Shchedrin. In: Encyclopaedia Judaica, 2nd ed. Ed. by Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. Vol. 18, Detroit 2007, p. 426.

[38] Sklyarenko: Zinovii Tolkachov, p. 9.

[39] Kholostenko, E.:Zinovii Tolkachov. Kharkov 1933, pp. 6–7 Quoted in Sklyarenko: Zinovii Tolkachov, p. 9, n. 7.

Although now mainly creating monumental propaganda art in the offi-
cial Socialist-realist style promoted by Stalin's government, Tolkatchev also
illustrated books. These generally comprised works by Soviet authors such
as Maxim Gorky, Nikolai Ostrovsky, and Leonid Pervomaiskii, but they also
included Erich Maria Remarque's famous 1929 anti-war novel "All Quiet on
the Western Front". Tolkatchev's book illustration exhibited much more free-
dom in style and the use of various artistic sources, from Francois Millet and
Honoré Daumier to the German expressionists, notably Kaethe Kollwitz,
whose art Tolkatchev knew and cherished from the early 1920s.

During the 1920s Soviet Russia developed special cultural ties with Wei-
mar Germany and much of its contemporary art, viewed by the Soviets as
revolutionary, was exhibited in Moscow and Ukraine until the early 1930s.[40] A
wide range of artists representing styles and movements such as Expression-
ism, Neue Sachlichkeit, and Bauhaus, took part. However, high transportation
costs meant that Soviet audiences were mainly able to see graphic works, book
illustrations, and posters, rather than oil paintings and sculptures. Neverthe-
less, German Expressionism and political art became highly cherished and
were analyzed, among others, by such a well-known Russian-Jewish art critic
as Yakov Tugendkhol'd in his 1928 book on artistic culture in the West. When
comparing German art to French art, he saw in the former elevated intellec-
tualism, analytical approach, and a return to the Germanic Gothic expressive-
ness, notably found in the art of Mathias Grünwald.[41]

A number of German artists who exhibited in the Soviet Union were them-
selves Communists or sympathized with the political left. Among the best
known were George Grosz, John Heartfield, and Kollwitz. All of them were
strongly affected by World War One and its aftermath and occasionally used
Christian iconography, such as the motif of the Crucifixion or Pièta, in order
to respond to human suffering. Grosz's crucified Jesus wearing a gas mask
became one of the best known anti-war icons (fig. 5).

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[40] Pyschnovskaya, Zinadia: Deutsche Kunstaustellungen in Moskau und ihre Organisatoren. In:
      Berlin-Moskau/Moskau-Berlin, 1900–1950. Bildende Kunst, Photographie, Architektur. Ed.
      by Irina Antonowa and Jörn Merkert. Munich and New York 1995, pp. 187–192. Lenin and
      Anatoly Lunacharsky, the minister of culture, themselves encouraged those artistic ties and
      viewed German revolutionary art as being more advanced than Soviet art.
[41] Tugendkhol'd, Yakov A.: Germanskoe iskusstvo. In: Iz istorii zapadnoevropeskogo, russ-
      kogo i sovetskogo iskusstva, izbrannye staty i ocherki. Moscow 1987, pp. 130–137.

Fig. 5: George Grosz, "Christ with Gasmask", 1924, drawing, © photograph 000196– Rauch collection, INTERFOTO, Munich.

Tolkatchev used expressive style primarily in his 1937–38 pastels and oils inspired by the writings of the famous Russian-Jewish author Sholem Aleichem. They were created for the 1939 Kiev exhibition dedicated to the late Yiddish writer's eightieth birthday and received very good reviews. It is significant to note here that this 1939 revival of interest in Sholem Aleichem's tragi-comic world of the pre-revolutionary Jewish *shtetl* and Tolkatchev's illustrations of it appeared at the very time when the Soviet Union was about to sign its non-aggression pact with Hitler's Germany. The treaty included the annexation of the Baltic states and parts of Poland and Romania, which, among other things, increased the existing Soviet Jewish population of about three million to five million. The issue of their assimilation, loyalty, acceptance and understanding of the Soviet-Jewish identity became quite important, especially because, in contrast to Germany, at this time the Soviet Union offered its Jewish citizens a degree of security.[42]

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[42]   Aside from the 1939 Kiev exhibition, in that same year fourteen of Sholem-Aleichem's works
        were published in the Soviet Union. In addition, a large exhibition "The Jews in Tsarist Russia

Fig. 6: Zinovii Tolkatchev, "The Yellow Crosses" (from the series *Occupiers*), 1942, oil on canvas, 85 x 64 cm, private collection.

In 1941, after the German attack on the USSR and the outbreak of hostilities between the two countries, Tolkatchev became the head of the Committee of the Communist Artists of Ukraine and was active in evacuating artists and their families. Despite his age, he also volunteered to join the Red Army, and as a private accompanied the armored forces and participated in battles. All this gave him firsthand experience of the suffering of the local population, mainly Jewish and Polish, inflicted both by the Germans and their Ukrainian supporters. In one of the works, "The Yellow Cross" created in 1942 (fig. 6), he seemed to have painted Sholem-Aleichem's character Tevye showing him now under the new and tragic circumstances created by the war. While the color yellow was usually used during the Holocaust for the six-pointed stars that Jews were forced to wear as a mark of defamation, it seems

and the USSR", was held in 1939 at Leningrad's Ethnographic Museum stressing the Bolshevik view of the new 'Soviet Jewish culture'. See Krupnik, Igor: Soviet Cultural and Ethnic Policies towards Jews. A Legacy Reassessed. In: Jews and Jewish Life in Russia and the Soviet Union. Ed. by Yaacov Ro'i. Ilford [England] 1995, pp. 67–86.

Fig. 7: Zinovii Tolkatchev, "The Open Gate" (from the series "Jesus in Majdanek"), 1945, gouache, charcoal and crayon on paper, 100 x 75 cm, © Anel Tolkatcheva-Shield, on permanent loan at The State Museum at Majdanek, Lublin.
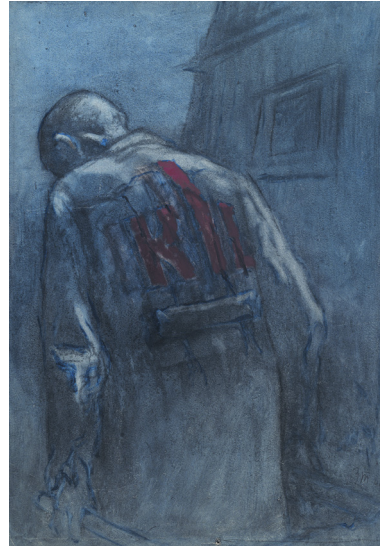
Fig. 8: Zinovii Tolkatchev, "Stigmatized Man", 1944, oil on cardboard, 67,5 x 48,5 cm, collection of the Yad Vashem Museum, Jerusalem, Gift of Sigmund A. Rolat, New York, in memory of his parents Henryk and Mania, who perished in the Holocaust, image no. 5357/4.

that Tolkatchev deliberately replaced here the star with a yellow cross, possibly trying to stress the universal character of the victim marked by 'the cross' who thus – like Jesus – was on his path to Golgotha. Three years after this initial use of a Christian symbol for a Jewish victim, and – as we saw – after witnessing Majdanek and Auschwitz atrocities, Tolkatchev created the Passion series.

In the first scene of this modern Via Dolorosa, Jesus is shown from behind, entering the camp in his long robe marked "KL" (an abbreviation of "Konzentrazionslager", or concentration camp) on his back, just as the clothes of the camp's prisoners were marked (figs. 7–8). However, due to the elongated shape of the red dividing line, the letters recall a bleeding cross. In the following image, the earlier shown "Ecce Homo" (fig. 2), is marked by a cluster of defamation signs and recalls the international character of the community of prisoners united in their suffering. Tolkatchev's universal Christ is

Fig. 9: Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, *Christ Presented to the People* (*Ecce Homo*), late fifteenth – mid-sixteenth century, oil on canvas, 60 x 59, 1 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Asbjorn R. Lunde, in memory of his parents, Karl and Elisa Lunde, 1996, no. 1996.261.

surrounded here by mocking Nazi officers, thus closely recalling traditional Western scenes depicting the mocking of Jesus (fig. 9). The following images, as in traditional Passion scenes, show Christ's – and thus that of all prisoners – painful way to Golgotha: he is carrying a heavy burden (figs. 10–11) – depicted as similar to carrying the cross – comprised of barbed wire that recalls a gigantic wreath of thorns; he is gassed in a gas chamber (fig. 12), shown with his arms spread as on the cross in the famous Grünwald painting (fig. 13), while a realistically depicted barred window of a guard's booth appears in the upper right corner; he is burned in a crematorium (fig. 14) that both recalls a real one, but also refers to the famous Renaissance painting "Dead Christ" by Mantegna (fig. 15). By such intentional borrowing from the past icons of Western art and culture, Tolkatchev simultaneously showed its destruction in the flames of the Holocaust.

4. Christ's Passion as a Holocaust Icon

As noted above, Chagall had used the theme of a crucified Jewish Jesus as a victim of the Nazi regime as early as 1938. He continued to use this motif throughout the war years while he, as a refugee in America, imagined the

Fig. 10: Zinovii Tolkatchev, "The Appearance" (from the series "Jesus in Majdanek"), 1945, gouache, charcoal and crayon on paper, 100 x 75 cm, © Anel Tolkatcheva-Shield, on permanent loan at The State Museum at Majdanek, Lublin.

Fig. 11: Lorenzo Lotto, "Christ Carrying the Cross", 1526, oil on canvas, 66 x 60 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris, photo © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/Thierry La Mage, RF 1982–50.

destruction and murder of eastern European Jews. As Amishai-Maisels has shown, there were number of Holocaust artists apart from Chagall who turned to the theme of Christ's suffering in order to relate to their own and other Holocaust victims' suffering. Some of them, like Tolkatchev, imagined Jesus in the concentration camp.[43] Among them also was Hugo Huppert, a poet and pre-war Viennese Communist. Huppert lived for years in the Soviet Union and was best known as the translator of Mayakovsky's poetry into German. In 1945, upon arriving with the Soviets troops to Vienna, he published a moving ballad entitled "Der Heiland von Dachau" ("The Savior from Dachau"). The poem, originally written in 1943 as part of the collection *A Heart in a Tank*, is based on a true story and tells about the tragic death of an Austrian priest imprisoned in Dachau. The SS decided to mock him by turning him into Jesus, crowning him with barbed wire and shooting him tied to a cross, while he was

[43]   Amishai-Maisels: Christ in the Camps. In: ibid. Depiction and Interpretation, pp. 187–189.

Fig. 12: Zinovii Tolkatchev, "The Gas Chamber" (from the series "Jesus in Majdanek"), 1945, gouache, charcoal and crayon on paper, 100 x 75 cm, © Anel Tolkatcheva-Shield, on permanent loan at The State Museum at Majdanek, Lublin.

forced to wear a sign identifying him as "Jossel – a Jewish Prince."[44] Huppert's ballad was published as a book and illustrated by woodcuts created by Ferd[inand?] Kòra, today an unknown artist. The image of a crowned Christ-like inmate pushing a wheelbarrow closely corresponds to Tolkatschev's creation.

Like Tolkatschev, Huppert served in the propaganda units of the Red Army during the war, working as secretary to Ilya Ehrenburg, the famous Soviet-Jewish writer.[45] It was in 1943 that Huppert wrote two more moving poems, as part of the same collection "A Heart in a Tank". One, entitled "Ahasver", tells about a Wandering Jew from Vitebsk "where no one laments anymore; where no more Jews are left, as they all lie killed…" Yet, with a characteristically

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[44] Huppert, Hugo: Der Heiland von Dachau. Vienna 1945.
[45] During the war years, Ilya Ehrenburg, together with Soviet-Jewish writer Vassily Grossman and as a member of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, was engaged in compiling material for the so-called "Black Book", a collection of documents and testimonies describing the anti-Jewish crimes perpetrated on the territory of the Soviet Union and Poland. It is possible that Huppert worked for him at that time and was helping him with this project.
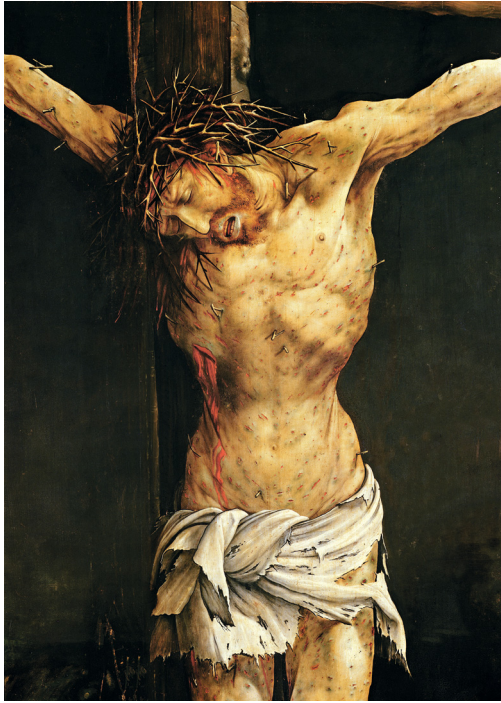
Fig. 13: Matthias Grunewald,
"Crucifixion" (detail),
from the central Crucifix-
ion panel of the Isenheim
Altarpiece, oil on panel,
c. 1512–15, Musée d'Unter-
linden, Colmar, © Bridgeman
Images, no. XIR71772.

universalist approach, the poet follows Ahasver to the Minsk ghetto's "wailing
wall" which appears to him to be a map of the world, in which all borders
have disappeared and many nations, disfigured by pain, mix together into a
dreadful, threatening army. Another poem, dedicated to that same "Wailing
Wall of Minsk", describes it as a wall preserving all the sorrows and words of
the Jewish victims, which will one day be released from silence and 'read' as a
book by all the people.[46]

In their art, both Huppert and Tolkatchev gave expression to the most
profound need to cope with the aftermath of the Holocaust, which they wit-
nessed as Red Army soldiers and Soviet citizens. Stalin's more relaxed attitude
towards the expression of nationality and religious beliefs, adopted during
World War Two as a measure to gain wider support and help in fighting the

[46]   http://www.klahrgesellschaft.at/Huppert.html (accessed June 2014).

Fig. 14: Zinovii Tolkatchev, "Crematorium" (from the series "Jesus in Majdanek"), 1945, gouache, charcoal and crayon on paper, 100 x 75 cm, © Anel Tolkatcheva-Shield, on permanent loan at The State Museum at Majdanek, Lublin.

Germans,[47] led them to create images imbued in universally understood pain, suffering, and salvation. Jews and Christians were united as victims of Nazism, and Jesus, being both a Jew and a Christian, expressed this need most deeply. The Soviet poet and the artist thus added a new meaning to the image of a 'historical Jesus'.

5. Epilogue

In 1946 Tolkatchev was demobilized and returned from Poland to the Soviet Union. By 1947 his war-time work was already being criticized as exaggerated and hostile to Soviet values. Although the series "Jesus in Majdanek" was never published, the authorities had found out about it and the artist was accused

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[47]   See Redlich, Shimon: War, Holocaust and Stalinism. A Documented Study of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in the USSR. Luxembourg 1995.

Fig. 15: Andrea Mantegna, "Dead Christ", c. 1480, tempera on canvas, 68 x 81 cm, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan. With the Permission of the Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo - SBSAE di Milano.

of using Western style, of spreading capitalist nationalism and mysticism, and of deforming the image of 'Soviet man'. These accusations paralleled the new general post-war Soviet attitude of avoiding any acknowledgment of either Jewish persecution or the Jewish contribution to the war effort, which were now seen as a form of nationalism and separatism.[48]

The official attitude towards Tolkatchev and his work did, however, change in the mid-sixties. Thus in 1965, to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet victory in World War Two, the drawings made on Auschwitz stationery were finally published in Kiev in an album entitled "Auschwitz. Nevertheless,

[48]   Sklyarenko: Zinovii Tolkachov, p. 30.

"Jesus in Majdanek" was exhibited for the first time only after the collapse of
the Soviet Union, in a 2005 retrospective exhibition of Tolkatchev's work at
the National Museum in Kiev, Ukraine.[49]

[49]   Ibid., p. 148, figs. 31–35.