John Landless on the Hudson: Yvan Goll's Reception of Voltaire during his American Exile

by Robert Vilain

Yvan and Claire Goll were forced to flee their home in Paris in August 1939. Not only were they Jewish, but both also had a long history, in print, of outspoken comments on cultural and political topics that the Nazis regarded as subversive, so they were very much at risk. Yvan had been the German-speaking figurehead for Henri Barbusse's left-wing internationalist group Clarté in the 1920s, whose principles had been hatred of war and a desire for social regeneration, and which was later associated with the Third International.[1] He regarded Barbusse and his followers as 'les authentiques descendants des Encyclopédistes et de Diderot'.[2] The couple arrived in New York on 6 September 1939 where they were briefly interned before moving into an apartment on West 113th Street. They stayed in the United States until 31 May 1947 when they re-embarked for Europe, arriving in Cherbourg on 4 June. Yvan was by that point severely ill with leukaemia, and he died in February 1950. His tombstone in Père Lachaise was designed by Robert-Jean Longuet, a militant socialist and a great-grandson of Karl Marx but also a friend from Goll's time working in the Office of War Information in New York. The inscription on Goll's tombstone is taken from the end of a poem he wrote in 1944 entitled 'Identité de Jean sans Terre':

> Je n'aurai pas duré plus que l'écume
> Aux lèvres de la vague sur le sable
> Né sous aucune étoile un soir sans lune
> Mon nom ne fut qu'un sanglot périssable[.][3]

Below that is the phrase 'ci-gît Jean sans Terre', cementing publicly Goll's own private identification with his literary creation, John Landless.

The figure of Jean sans Terre is a version of Ahasver, the Wandering Jew, and he first appeared in print in a journal in May 1936 and in an edition of nine poems self-published by Goll in Paris on 20 June of the same year. Two more

1 See Nicole Racine, 'The Clarté Movement in France, 1919–21', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 2.2 (1967), 195–208.

2 Michel Grunewald, 'Yvan Goll, les Français, les Allemands, les Européens (1918–1934)', in *Yvan Goll (1891–1950): Situations de l'écrivain*, ed. by Michel Grunewald and Jean-Marie Valentin (Bern, 1994), pp. 35–54 (p. 39).

3 Quotations from Goll's poetry are from *Die Lyrik in vier Bänden*, ed. by Barbara Glauert-Hesse (Berlin, 1996), here III, 178 (= *Lyrik*).

slim volumes appeared in 1938 and 1939, making 28 poems in all. But two-thirds of all the poems on this subject were written between 1940 and 1947, in New York, mostly published singly in magazines and journals. The corpus consists of 76 clearly distinct poems, and just under a hundred if one includes versions and rewritings so different as to demand new readings. Individual poems commemorate specific events in Goll's life – 'Jean sans Terre traverse l'Atlantique' is on one level about the Golls' journey into exile, for example, and 'Jean sans Terre veille une morte' reflects Claire's suicide attempt in July 1938 – but the collections encompass Goll's ongoing existential anxieties, the inner dividedness of a man with two homelands and two native languages yet at home nowhere, the Jew conscious of his stateless heritage, and the writer attached to a centuries-old literary tradition but profoundly sceptical of the supposed progress of modern European civilization – 'a world in which there are no values and little love' as the American poet Louise Bogan put it.[4] One of Goll's American translators, Clark Mills, captures the combination of the personal and the representative in *Jean sans Terre*: 'he is timely in that his problems spring from our world of refugees, fallen systems and hierarchies, and universal war; he is timeless in that his enthusiasm, sufferings and potentialities are simple, and are those of all men at all moments of history.'[5] He suggests also that 'the negative [condition] "landless" rests on Jean not as a burden and misfortune – though often it seems these, even to him – but as a visible token of his freedom from the constraints and intangible burdens his fellows create more than willingly. Belonging to no village, no region, no class, no continent, he can absorb all forms of experience, all cultures. He is available […]; landless, he inherits the earth'.[6] This expresses well the lasting value of the Jean sans Terre poems, their evocation in a supra-personal sense, for successive generations, of a complex existential sense of unbelonging, and it echoes the context of Hugh of St Victor's famous dictum, as quoted by another noted exile, Erich Auerbach: 'Delicatus ille est adhuc cui patria dulcis est, fortis autem cui omne solum patria est, perfectus vero cui *mundus totus exilium est*' (the man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is as a foreign land)'.[7]

Prosodically the poems have intriguing roots in both popular culture and exile. Very little of Goll's huge range of lyric poetry is written with regular metrical patterns or rhymes; however, all the poems in the first two volumes of *Jean sans Terre* are in quatrains, cross-rhymed *a b a b* and almost all have five syllables in each line. The five-syllable line rhymed in this bold way is rare in literary verse, but

4 Bogan, 'A Note on Jean sans Terre', *Partisan Review*, 7 (1940), 294–95 (p. 295).

5 Mills, 'Critical Notes II', in Yvan Goll, *Jean Sans Terre*, trans. various, preface by W. H. Auden, critical notes by Louise Bogan et al. (New York and London, 1958), p. 17.

6 Ibid.

7 Erich Auerbach, 'Philologie der Weltliteratur', in *Weltliteratur: Festgabe für Fritz Strich* (Bern, 1952), p. 17 (my emphasis). The quotation is from *Didascalion*, III.19, which itself quotes Ovid's *Epistolae ex Ponto*, I.iii.35–36: *The Didascalion of Hugh of St Victor*, trans. Jerome Taylor (New York, 1991), p. 101.

it is common in French popular song (it is the pattern of 'Au clair de la lune', for example, and that very line opens Goll's 'Chanson de Jean sans Lune'), but here the short, jaunty line is 'ironically adapted to the tragedy of existence'.[8] As the series developed, Goll's self-imposed formal restrictiveness diminished and the lines became longer, with a mixture of four, five, six and eight syllables in the third volume, often reminiscent of Verlaine. Goll's acknowledged model for his basic stanza form is German, Heine's *Deutschland* and *Romanzero*. Indeed, the very name 'Jean sans Terre' may derive in part from Heine's 'Hans ohne Land', a poem about Archduke Johann of Austria (Goll was reading Heine when he first worked on these poems). Several commentators have drawn parallels between Goll and Heine, their 'deutsch-französische Doppelexistenz',[9] and their experience of exile. And yet Verlaine's most productive period was also one of wandering, in London, Brussels and Paris with Rimbaud, and Goll will certainly have seen in him a precursor in rootlessness, too. Think only of the poem 'Walcourt', which likens the lovers to wandering Jews:

> Briques et tuiles,
> O les charmants
> Petits asiles
> Pour les amants!
> […]
> Gares prochaines,
> Gais chemins grands . . .
> Quelles aubaines,
> Bons juifs-errants![10]

In 1936 Goll, not yet exiled from his home in Paris, was extremely concerned about political developments in Germany; Jean sans Terre, who dominated that summer, was born in part of these anxieties. At exactly this moment Goll reached for another notable exile, Voltaire, sending his wife a German edition of *Candide*: 'Ich freue mich[,] daß Dir die Candide-Ausgabe gefallen hat. Lies und werde weise: lerne dort, wie Voltaire mit einer grandiosen Einfachheit, beinahe simpel zuweilen, die tiefsten und für alle Zeiten gültigen Wahrheiten behandelt. Der Candide bleibt für mich *das* Kunstwerk der franz[ösischen] Literatur'.[11] Goll had championed Voltaire for nearly two decades before this, publishing an anthology of extracts in German translation in 1921 under the title *Das Lächeln Voltaires*, for

8 Francis Carmody, *The Poetry of Yvan Goll: A Biographical Study* (Paris, 1956) p. 74.

9 Dieter Lamping, 'Yvan Golls verdeckte Heine-Rezeption', in his *Von Kafka bis Celan: Jüdischer Diskurs in der deutschen Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen, 1998), pp. 44–47 (p. 44).

10 Paul Verlaine, *Œuvres poétiques complètes*, ed. by Y.-G. Le Dantec and Jacques Borel (Paris, 1962), p. 197.

11 Claire Goll, Yvan Goll, Paula Ludwig, *'Nur einmal noch werd ich dir untreu sein': Briefwechsel und Aufzeichnungen 1917–1966*, ed. by Barbara Glauert-Hesse, 2 vols (Göttingen, 2013), I, 25 (henceforth cited as GGL).

example. During his exile in New York, Voltaire was the literary figure to whom he most often returned, most expansively in an essay from 1943 published in a widely received volume entitled *The Torch of Freedom*, doubtless alluding to the Statue of Liberty.[12] The volume collects essays on twenty exiles from the past by twenty contemporary exiles. The subjects include Tycho Brahe, Lord Byron, Sun Yat-sen, Emile Zola, Simon Bolívar, Karl Marx, Giuseppe Mazzini, Vladimir Lenin, and Heinrich Heine; amongst the better-known contributors are Heinrich Mann, André Maurois, Raoul Auernheimer, and Lion Feuchtwanger. The underlying principle of the volume was the claim that 'the exiles of today can enter into the experience of the exiles of yesterday, can understand their motives, their suffering, their hopes, their destinies' (*Torch*, p. vii).

Despite this fairly straightforward premise, *The Torch of Freedom* is a problematic volume. Feuchtwanger agreed to write the opening essay on Ovid only reluctantly and was nervous about the overall undertaking, described by Johannes Evelein as the desire to 'wrap exile in a cloak of heroism and self-sacrifice'.[13] The problem with Ovid in this context is that he hated exile; he is reputed to have claimed 'exilium mors est',[14] and he certainly regarded his years in Pontus as torture, constituting virtually the complete evacuation of his identity. Goll harboured doubts, too. A review of the 1943 collection in the *New York Times* by Irwin Stark notes the 'brilliant and variegated roster' of the volume,[15] and reflects that the subjects are united both by nostalgia for their native lands and by a fear that exile will dry up the creative juices. He notes how frequently reference is made to the figure of Antaeus, whose strength was preserved by physical contact with Mother Earth and who was only vanquished when Herakles lifted him off the ground to crush him. Irwin singles out a phrase in Goll's essay for criticism: Goll claimed 'The German mind and the French mind can never become close. In each German there lurks both Faust and Mephistopheles', but Irwin regarded this as an 'old-world' prejudice that vitiates the high moral purpose of the collection.

Goll's fourteen-page essay reminds readers of salient episodes in Voltaire's biography and suggests how these reflect the present. After an altercation with the Duc de Rohan in 1726, Voltaire was imprisoned in the Bastille and a condition

12 *The Torch of Freedom*, ed. by Emil Ludwig and Henry B. Kranz (New York, 1943); reprint (Port Washington, NY, and London, 1972), p. vii (= *Torch*). The phrase 'torch of freedom' was somewhat hackneyed even when Stanley Baldwin used it in a famous broadcast in March 1934 and then as the title of his collected essays: *The Torch of Freedom* (London, 1937). Baldwin may have had the phrase from 'The Torch Race', a popular poem by William Cox Bennett that celebrates the transmission of the Hellenic ideal of freedom in a relay from Athens to the United States. Its refrain is 'On – flash the torch of freedom on!' (*Songs of a Song-Writer* [London, 1876], pp. 32–34).

13 Johannes F. Evelein, *Literary Exiles from Nazi Germany* (Rochester, NY, 2014), p. 113.

14 There is no evidence that Ovid said or wrote this phrase, although he often associated exile with death. For his views on exile, see J. M. Claassen, 'Exile, Death and Immortality: Voices from the Grave', *Latomus*, 55.3 (1996), 571–90 (esp. pp. 576–80).

15 Irwin Stark, 'Some Exiles Speak', *New York Times*, 17 October 1943, p. 3.

of his release was exile in England. In Goll's less than elegant words – he was writing in his third language – 'Across the Channel, Voltaire stepped into a real bath of freedom. He found codified into laws the feeling for social justice and human dignity which he had sensed developing in Paris. Coming from French dungeons he was blinded by this unsuspected light. Freedom of thought suffered no restrictions' (*Torch*, p. 66). Goll also notes that Voltaire delayed official publication of his *Lettres sur les Anglais* until 1734, but that the publisher of a pirate edition was clapped in irons and his book 'burned by order of Parliament'. Who in the German exile community in 1943 could *not* think at this point of the book burnings in Germany a decade earlier? Goll's work was included in the burnings: he wrote to Paula Ludwig on 18 May 1933, 'Nach dem Schlag, den wir Dichter in Deutschland bekommen haben: – die Eurokokke hat auch auf dem Scheiterhaufen gebrannt – ist mir persönlich jeder Schrei im Halse stecken geblieben' (GGL, I, 280). *Die Eurokokke* is a novel he published in 1927, the only one of his own works mentioned in the short 'Selbstbiographie' in *Torch of Freedom*. Goll's *Nachlass* preserves two newspaper cuttings about the book burnings, one from an Alsatian paper that singles Goll out alongside Henri Barbusse, Jack London, and Upton Sinclair as the four writers of most note to its readership.[16] Its title, 'Literarisches Autodafé an der Goethe-Universität', will have resonated with Goll as an echo of a chapter title from Voltaire's *Candide*, 'Comment on fit un bel auto-da-fé pour empêcher les tremblements de terre'.[17]

Goll's essay goes on to outline how, after fifteen years at Cirey, Voltaire retuned to Paris, but in 1750 accepted the invitation of Frederick II of Prussia to a post at his court in Berlin. He was not an exile in the sense in which many Europeans in the United States in the 1940s were exiles, because he left more or less willingly, but Voltaire was not to return to Paris for another 28 years.[18] Goll's remarks on the end of his subject's period in Prussia in March 1753 might have been written about himself: 'Voltaire drove back over the highways of Germany, a man without a country, an outcast. He reminded himself that he had never had a home. He had moved from castle to castle, from city to city, from country to country' (*Torch*, p. 72). He was arrested in Frankfurt at the request of Frederick II, who wanted back his chamberlain's key, the insignia of the Order of Merit, and a certain volume of poetry. He was eventually freed, but what did that freedom mean? Goll glosses: 'There is no fate worse than to feel as free as a bird but not be awaited anywhere, to have not a square foot of land to call one's own' (*Torch*, p. 73). Voltaire went on his way, to Strasbourg and Colmar in Alsace – to

16 W. Bg., 'Literarisches Autodafé an der Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt', *Gebweiler Neueste Nachrichten*, 10 May 1933, [p. 2].

17 Voltaire is quoted where possible from *Œuvres complètes de Voltaire*, 205 vols (Oxford, 1968–2022); letters are identified only by 'D number' as used in vols LXXXV-CXXXV of that edition (= *OCV*): *Candide, ou l'optimisme*, ed. by René Pomeau, *OCV*, XLVIII (1980), p. 138.

18 Roger Pearson, *Voltaire Almighty: A Life in Pursuit of Freedom* (London, 2005), p. 216.

Goll's own neck of the woods, therefore – and 'became the ancestor of all the men without a country who, in the centuries to follow, wandered between France and Germany, belonging neither to the one nor to the other, tossed about from left to right' (*Torch*, p. 73).

It is a lovely irony – but also the purest coincidence – that when Voltaire arrived in Colmar in October 1753 to convalesce from an illness his landlady was a certain Mme Goll.[19] Yvan Goll records this happenstance in his essay and will certainly have been just as conscious of the parallels to be drawn between Voltaire's wanderings and his own life as he recounts Voltaire's journey towards Switzerland, 'later to become the classic land of exiles from Byron to Lenin' (*Torch*, p. 74), and where Goll himself had spent the First World War. Goll ends the essay with an account of Voltaire's return to Paris in 1778. He was visited there by a delegation from the Académie Française, by the English Ambassador, and by Benjamin Franklin, who brought his grandson for a blessing. Voltaire is said on this occasion to have uttered the benediction – in English – 'God and Liberty'.[20] Goll's emotional association of the great Enlightenment rebel and serial exile with the imminent foundation of the United States of America is very clear. Exiles are torchbearers; Voltaire, in his way, ignited the torch of the Statue of Liberty.

In the *New York Times* Irwin singled out Goll's distinction between 'the German mind' and 'the French mind', which did not suit the mood of *Torch of Freedom*, whose ambitions were reconciliation and a notion of tolerance that smooths out difference. But Goll was almost uniquely placed to reflect on Franco-German cultural and intellectual tensions, being a native speaker of both languages, brought up mostly in French, schooled mostly in German, writing alternately and sometimes almost simultaneously in both, and he took a different view. He had consistently asserted that the two cultures are fundamentally different and rendering them complementary rather than internecine can be said to have been his life's work. Goll famously described himself as '[Ein] Mann, der zwischen zwei Stühlen sitzt', explaining: 'Wir Elsässer, die wir wählen können, sitzen zwischen zwei Stühlen. Von Frankreich und Deutschland wehen Süd- und Nordwind, es zieht am Rhein, und eine Bronchitis ist schnell da, zumindest Rheumatismus'.[21] Voltaire was repeatedly deployed throughout the 1920s and 1930s to articulate the tensions between French and German thinking and as part of Goll's pro-French propaganda. Michel Grunewald sums this up: 'La seule chose qui importe pour lui […] est que les mouvements intellectuels dont la France est le théâtre montrent

19 Noted in a letter to Sébastien Dupont on 1 October 1753 (D5536).

20 Pearson, *Voltaire Almighty*, p. 174.

21 B. G., [Interview with Goll] 'Der Mann, der zwischen zwei Stühlen sitzt', *Die literarische Welt*, 5.5: Sondernummer: *Das moderne Frankreich, I* (1929), p. 7. Goll often expressed this cultural tension in physical terms: in 1933 he described waking up at night with convulsions, evoking a kind of ancestral St Vitus' Dance: 'diese Füsse des Ewigen Juden, die die Wanderschaft nicht vergessen können! Wie es in meinen Augen unruht, zwischen zwei Heimaten ewig der Heimatlose' (GGL, II, 224).

combien l'esprit des Lumières, le seul esprit de progrès à ses yeux, est toujours vivant dans ce pays, alors qu'en Allemagne il n'a pas grande influence'.[22]

Voltaire is also singled out in a way that underlines how Goll wants to avoid seeing cultural distinctiveness in simplistic nationalist terms. Writing for a German audience, he claims 'Voltaire ist unser. […] Wir brauchen ihn bitternötig. Wir brauchen einen rücksichtslosen Kritiker und einen herzwarmen Menschen'.[23] 'Seine Romane sind nicht französisch, nicht europäisch, sondern globisch, sie führen uns in wundervoller Unwirklichkeit zu allen entdeckten und unentdeckten Ländern der Welt und zeigen in trostreicher Ironie, daß überall der Bazillus Mensch derselbe ist' (ibid.), and he compares Candide with Charlie Chaplin, whose humour is elsewhere attributed a redemptive capacity akin to Christ's: 'Candide ist Charlots Großahne. Beide repräsentieren jenen tölpelhaften, idealen Optimismus, den naiven Kampf mit dem tückischen Objekt und dem sehr viel dümmeren Subjekt. Beide zeigen in großer Allegorie die Lächerlichkeit des sinnlosen "Ernstes des Lebens"'.[24] Goll sees Voltaire as the antidote to inhumanity, the cure for the virus that infects humankind and makes it produce war, exploitation, and inequality. The 1943 *Torch of Freedom* essay on Voltaire is introduced with a reference to the same idea, to the 'Eurokokke' that has infected humanity, as expounded in a novel that was burned by the Nazis. Goll's thinking in the 1940s is always linked to the ideas he developed in previous decades; much of what matters to Goll in 1943 is how to prevent those intervening years from being wasted. Alongside his reference to the novel *Die Eurokokke* in the *Torch of Freedom*, he quotes the second line of part V of 'East Coker' from T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, which was published in book form in New York that year: 'Twenty years largely wasted, the years of *l'entre deux guerres*'.[25] Goll, who translated 'The Dry Salvages' into French in 1943, quotes the same line in his introduction to Klaus Mann's anthology *Heart of Europe*, which also appeared in New York in 1943,[26] saying it was a period 'which had such brilliant chances and which made so little of them'.

Goll's own contribution to *Heart of Europe* is his poem 'John Landless leads the Caravan' in a translation by William Carlos Williams. 'Jean sans Terre conduit la caravane' originally opened the third of Goll's three self-published volumes in 1939 but was republished or translated more than half a dozen times in his lifetime. It is a disturbing poem with suicidal overtones at various points, but mostly it is poem about Judaism and Messianic prophecy. The imagery is frequently biblical and Goll writes overtly of 'mon peuple', 'ma foi' and 'La force de ma

22 Grunewald, 'Yvan Goll, les Français, les Allemands, les Européens', p. 39.

23 Yvan Goll, *Das Lächeln Voltaires* (Bremen, 1994), p. 11 (henceforth cited as *LV*).

24 *LV*, p. 11. For Chaplin and Christ see Goll's 'Apologie des Charlot', *Die neue Schaubühne*, 2.2 (1920), 31–33, and his 'poème cinématographique' *Die Chapliniade* (four versions, in German and French, between 1920 and 1924).

25 *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London, 1982), p. 182.

26 *Heart of Europe: An Anthology of Creative Writing in Europe 1920–1940*, ed. by Klaus Mann and Hermann Kesten (New York, 1943), p. 5.

religion' as he describes a caravan of camels wandering through the desert.[27] The trek echoes the forty years of wandering in the Sinai wilderness to which Heine refers in *Romanzero*, a work to which this poem is indebted, perhaps even to the level of specific images of the 'Schmerzenskarawane Israels […] In der Wüste des Exils' from 'Jehuda ben Halevy'.[28] It also alludes to the much longer period of cultural exile of the Jewish people: 'Voguez voguez lents dromadaires / Et traversez l'éternité / Depuis les aubes quaternaires / Jusqu'au tombeau précipité'. On one level Jean sans Terre links his own travails to those of Jews throughout history, suggesting that he is 'following the path of his ancestors, but with no more success';[29] they were no more able to 'défricher le vieux néant' than he has been. He bears the ancestral skeleton within him and hears 'le loup rouge qui hurle / Dans la caverne de mon sang / Croquant au bord du crépuscule / Les os du rêve renaissant' – which is an especially poignant image in the light of Goll's later diagnosis with leukaemia. The 'jeune dieu' reborn in man by virtue of a final sacrifice (defined in Goll's own German translation as 'aus meines Leibs gefällter Säule') might suggest the advent of Christ, but the roots of this sacrifice are in the Jewish tradition, in Abraham and the planned sacrifice of Isaac, not specifically Christian but a more broadly Messianic vision. In the following stanza Goll echoes the opening of Isaiah, 35: 'The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose', recalling God's promise for the future of Zion. Jean knows that the condition of strength is faith – 'il suffit que ma foi revienne' – and that the expression of that faith is poetry – 'l'aurore de mon choral'. Goll's own German version of this poem is extant and it ends more clearly than the French: 'Und alle, die den Glauben haben, / Ob Löwe oder Dromedar, / Soll meiner Hände Salz nur laben / Und meine Liebe wunderbar' (*Lyrik*, III, 121). There is a suggestion in these final lines that Jean himself might potentially fulfil the Messianic prediction and thereby become a kind of Christ figure as had been suggested of Chaplin in the 1920s.

In his Voltaire essay Goll remarked that when taking refuge from his critics in the Château de Cirey, Voltaire 'had the advantage of being situated on the border of Lorraine' – Goll's own home territory – and that 'in case of danger Voltaire would only have to place this border between himself and the emissaries of the king' (*Torch*, p. 69). Voltaire surfaces explicitly in conjunction with Goll's nostalgia for his home region in a number of poems from the 1940s. The most famous is his figured poem 'Croix de Lorraine' (published in time for Christmas 1940). The distinctive double-barred Cross of Lorraine was adopted by Duke René II of Lorraine for the Battle of Nancy in 1477. It is often associated with Jeanne d'Arc, who was born in Lorraine, and during the periods in which Alsace-Lorraine was

27 Quotations from this poem are from *Lyrik*, III, 118–19

28 Heinrich Heine, *Werke in vier Bänden* (Frankfurt a. M. and Leipzig, 1994), I: *Gedichte*, ed. by Christoph Siegrist, p. 203.

29 Margaret Parmée, *Ivan Goll: The Development of his Poetic Themes and their Imagery* (Bonn, 1991), p. 64.

annexed to Germany this cross was a powerful symbol of French patriotism. In June 1940 it became the emblem of de Gaulle's Free France under the occupation, and a powerful counter-symbol to the 'Hakenkreuz'.

Ulrich Ernst calls this poem 'ein Stück Exilliteratur in nuce'. He shows how the evocation of the heroic suffering of the soldiers from Lorraine and the idea of 'ein kulturelles Kernland Frankreich […] verknüpfen das heraldische und politische Signum des Doppelkreuzes mit der genuin martyrologischen Symbolik des Kreuzes Christi'.[30] He stresses the use of New and Old Testament imagery, such as 'Tour de souffrance' and 'Jardin des pleurs' (ll. 3–4), imagery that suggests Gethsemane but also forms part of a series of images of France's fertility, the familiar motif of 'abundantia terrae'. Goll must have been familiar with the construction of medieval and Baroque poems in the form of a cross: his poem has 33 lines, and the phrase 'Croix de France' is at the mid-point; 33 was the age at which Christ was crucified; the divine name Elohim also appears 33 times in the creation story in Genesis. Ernst summarizes the effect:

> Durch […] spirituell präformierte Metaphern, die das christliche Frankreich in seinem Kampf gegen das faschistische Deutschland als zweites Kanaan, als Land des Gottesvolkes erscheinen lassen, gewinnt das nationale […] Freiheitspathos des Emigranten eine sakrale Aura, die sich an späterer Stelle im lyrischen Denkvorgang in der Gestalt der Jeanne d'Arc verdichtet.[31]

The yule log or 'bûche de Noël' with which the poem's distribution at Christmastime will have coincided grimly echoes the 'bûcher de Jeanne' (l. 26), the stake at which St Joan was burned. Melding the religious imagery with the 'bleu-blanc-rouge' of the national flag cements the poem's core assertion of the quasi-divinely sanctioned status of the French cause in the war.

Voltaire is implicitly present alongside Jeanne d'Arc. Goll very much admired his satirical poem *La Pucelle d'Orléans* (1762), and refers to it the 1943 essay (*Torch*, p. 74). There is a long tradition of French critical resentment against what is thought to be Voltaire's shabby treatment of a national heroine in his poem, but Goll surely saw that its 'satirical thrust is anticlerical, not antinational'.[32] Voltaire resurfaces more overtly within similar image clusters in *Chansons de France*, a sixteen-page pamphlet issued in New York in 1940.[33] The second of the three poems in the pamphlet, 'Chanson de la Galère "Paris"', brings alive the coat of arms of the city of Paris – a silver sailing ship on a red background beneath a blue banner with yellow *fleurs de lys*. Goll conjures the image of the Good Ship Paris sailing down

30 Ulrich Ernst, 'Die neuzeitliche Rezeption des mittelalterlichen Figurengedichts in Kreuzform', in *Mittelalter-Rezeption: Ein Symposium*, ed. by Peter Wapnewski (Stuttgart, 1986), pp. 177–233 (pp. 220–21).

31 Ibid., p. 222.

32 Ritchie Robertson, *Mock Epic Poetry from Pope to Heine* (Oxford, 2009), p. 140.

33 The three texts are published confusingly in *Lyrik*, IV, 59–70, interspersed with other poems on related themes.

the Seine towards evening, her hold full of the cares of the French, leaving behind hope, a 'galère / Des naufragés' (*Lyrik*, IV, 66) journeying towards nothingness. The red of the arms is said to represent the fifteenth-century poet François Villon, whose verse focused on trouble, tribulation, and poverty, often humorously; the blue is identified as Voltaire; both are being carried away towards 'le néant'. The red and the blue vie for position alongside the more dominant black as if in deliberate distortion of the 'bleu-blanc-rouge' of the tricolore: the ship's captain wears black gloves; the passengers include Kings of Spades and Queens of Hearts, 'ébénistes' (cabinet-makers, based on 'ébène', 'ebony'), and chimneysweeps. The card figures are important: they are essentially two-faced, and in 'Jean sans Terre le Double' they encapsulate duality itself, 'l'être Double / Le Roi de Cœur debout et à l'envers' (*Lyrik*, III, 174). But the darker figures echo the massacres and executions mentioned in stanza 11 and alluded to also in 'Croix de Lorraine' (l. 15). The trajectory of the journey is towards 'le néant' via Rouen – which is where Jeanne d'Arc was burned – but there is some ambivalence, too, given that the opening line, 'Vogue galère', is so close to the idiomatic phrase 'vogue la galère', which means 'keep going, come what may', or in an exactly contemporary phrase beloved of Churchill, 'keep buggering on'.[34]

Jeanne d'Arc was important to Goll as well as to France more generally. She was born in Domrémy in the Vosges, less than 100 km from Goll's own birthplace in Saint-Dié, and features prominently in the first of the *Chansons de France*.

> Nous n'irons plus au bois ma belle
> Les lauriers sont coupés les ponts
> Aussi: les arcs-en-ciel
> Et même le Pont d'Avignon
>
> Jeanne d'Arc mortelle statue
> Un peu de bronze ensanglanté
> Dans cette France qui s'est tue
> Ton cœur a cessé de chanter
>
> Jeanne dans sa jupe de bure
> Assise sous les framboisiers
> Se prépare une confiture
> Avec du sang de cuirassiers. (*Lyrik,* IV, 59)

'Nous n'irons plus au bois / Les lauriers sont coupés' were the first lines of a children's dancing rhyme popular in France since the mid seventeenth century (and attributed to Mme de Pompadour); 'Sur le Pont d'Avignon' is equally well known. The national importance of 'Nous n'irons plus' is indicated by the fact that after the war it became the station identifier for ORTF and later RFI. The original song features 'Jeanne, la bergère / […] / Allant cueillir la fraise'; Goll has a version of this in stanza three, linked to Jeanne d'Arc. The original song was about the clo-

34 See Martin Gilbert, *Winston Churchill's War Leadership* (New York, 2004), p. 29.

sure of brothels by Louis XIV during an epidemic of venereal disease: the laurel was their traditional door garland, and strawberry-like rashes were frequently associated with STDs. Goll grimly reworks the imagery into the 'raspberry jam' of war wounds in 1940.

'Chanson de France' may be the second version of a poem from the *Jean sans Terre* corpus, 'Jean sans Terre chante une ode à la France en mai 1940' (*Lyrik*, III, 224–28), although this version was composed in France before the outbreak of war and the 'May 1940' was added to its title later by Goll's widow. It certainly represents pre-war thinking; the earlier poem stresses France's innocence rather than her suffering and makes a very different use of the Joan of Arc figure who incarnates France itself. At this point Germany seems here to represent a potential threat rather than a current aggressor:

> Mais derrière tes rideaux d'orge
> D'où l'alouette aiguisait l'air
> N'entendais-tu jamais les forges
> Et les grognements de Fafner?[35]

Because of its ability to rise very quickly high into the sky, the lark has been a symbol of mediation between God and the earth. It is also associated with the goddess Ceres (and thus the barley fields in North-Eastern France that 'curtain' the capital from the German lands).[36] Here the saint is alluded to as 'douce paysanne / Séduite au coin du Bois dormant' and with a son by her 'amours rhénanes'. Francis Carmody suggests that Goll was specifically influenced by a reading of Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, suggesting that her seduction echoes Joan's betrayal of her higher purpose when she falls in love with Lionel.[37]

The coincidence that Voltaire's landlady in Colmar in 1753 was a Mme Goll has been noted above. There is a more eloquent irony in this, however, since the address of her house was 10 rue des Juifs, and Voltaire's 'sustained disparaging and dismissive attitude to Judaism and the Jews' is well known.[38] In the *Torch* essay Goll quotes Voltaire's response to being refused permission to return to Paris:

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35 *Lyrik*, III, 224. This stanza was taken into 'Terre de France', the third of the *Chansons de France*, in 1940 (*Lyrik*, IV, 68).

36 It is tempting to link the lark and Jeanne d'Arc via Jean Anouilh's *L'Alouette*, but I can find no evidence of a specific symbolic connection between the saint and the lark before the play's publication in 1952. The lark has nonetheless been almost metonymically associated with France for centuries: Caesar's 'Gallic' legion, 'Legio V Alaudae', took its (Gaulish, not Latin) nickname from the local soldiers' custom of wearing larks' wings on their helmets (still visible in the logo of Gauloises cigarettes); Jules Breton's symbolic painting 'Le Chant de l'alouette' (1884) was voted 'most popular painting in America' in 1934; many more examples could be adduced.

37 *Jean sans Terre: A Critical Edition with Analytical Notes*, ed. by Francis J. Carmody (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962), pp. 137 and 153–56.

38 Adam Sutcliffe, 'Myth, Origins, Identity: Voltaire, the Jews and the Enlightenment Notion of Toleration', *The Eighteenth Century*, 39.2 (1998), 107–26 (p. 107).

'I'm like a wandering Jew' (*Torch*, p. 73). In the *Lettres sur les Anglais* (1734) he described the Jewish nation as 'des barbares qui massacraient sans pitié leurs ennemis vaincus […] ce vil peuple, superstitieux, ignorant, privé des arts, privé du commerce',[39] for example, and when Adam Sutcliffe summarizes, 'the extent of Voltaire's contempt for the Jews, and the aggressive tone in which he often expresses this, cast a problematic shadow over his commitment to universal toleration', he perhaps understates the case.[40] Voltaire uses the figure of the Wandering Jew negatively on a number of occasions. Jasmin, a valet in his early drama *L'Enfant prodigue* (1736), proclaims, 'je suis las de tourmenter ma vie, / De vivre errant et damné comme un juif, / Le bonheur semble un être fugitif'.[41] When Voltaire was annoyed with the Marquis d'Argens, he allegedly engineered an occasion on which to read aloud an epigram written by Rousseau that compared d'Argens to 'the Wandering Jew', which was received as it was intended, as 'malicious […] mischievous and slanderous'.[42] In a letter to Maupertuis of 21 July 1740 Voltaire signed off, 'Adieu, je suis un juif errant à vous pour jamais' (D2271), and in what must be the letter to which Goll is referring in his essay (to the Comte d'Argental, 19 May 1754 from Colmar) Voltaire complains, 'Je suis errant comme un juif' (D5820). Voltaire was compared to the Wandering Jew by a number of nineteenth-century biographers. A description in a popular book by Gustave Merlet is stylistically not unlike Goll's rhetoric eight decades later: 'il vole du nord au midi, de l'est à l'ouest […] traînant avec lui l'homme-univers, l'homme-nature, l'homme-poésie, l'homme-humanité, pour lequel il n'y a ni Alpes, ni Pyrénées, ni Océan: Voltaire Don Quichotte, Voltaire Juif-Errant, condamné par la rhétorique à courir le monde, jusqu'à la fin du temps'.[43]

Goll's continuing championship of Voltaire is perhaps surprising given the latter's anti-Semitism. A certain blindness is apparent in *Das Lächeln Voltaires* (1921), where he translated the article 'Patrie' from the *Dictionnaire philosophique*. It is a sustained attack on simplistic notions of 'fatherland' or 'homeland', revealing the role of self-interest (financial or military) in traditional definitions and debunking sentimental or high-minded conceptions of patriotism. In Goll's translation, the extract begins, 'Hat ein Jude ein Vaterland?' and the second paragraph ends 'Er hat kein Vaterland: kein Quadratmeter der Erde gehört ihm' (*LV*, p. 96). In its French context there is nothing to suggest sympathy for the Jews in this article, but when Goll translates, it is hard not to read it quite differently.

39 *Lettres sur les Anglais (II)*, ed. by Nicholas Cronk et al. (Oxford, 2021), *OCV*, VIB, 289.

40 The paradoxes of Enlightenment anti-Semitism are explored lucidly in the early part of Robert S. Wistrich's article, 'Radical Antisemitism in France and Germany (1840–1880)', *Modern Judaism*, 15.2 (1995), 109–35.

41 *Œuvres de 1736*, ed. by T. E. D. Braun et al. (2003), *OCV*, XVI, 169.

42 Louise Mühlbach, *Berlin and Sans Souci: Frederick the Great and his Friends*, trans. by Mrs Chapman Coleman et al. (New York, 1867), p. 385.

43 Gustave Merlet, 'La Fantaisie dans la Littérature et la Morale: Le Roi Voltaire et la Reine Pompadour', in his *Réalistes et fantaisistes: études morales et littéraires* (Paris, 1863), p. 231. See also Arsène Houssaye, *Le Roi Voltaire* (Paris, 2nd ed.,1858), p. 244.

One wonders what he would have made of the article 'juif' in the *Questions sur l'encyclopédie*.

Was Goll alone in his championship of Voltaire amongst the exile community in America at this time? And did others baulk at Voltaire's reputation for anti-Semitism? He was not quite alone. André Maurois published *The Living Thoughts of Voltaire* in New York in 1939,[44] and Paul Klee's illustrations to *Candide* were republished there in a limited edition in English in 1944.[45] In 1940, as he was preparing his application for entry into the United States, Bertolt Brecht noted a plan to write 'ein kleines satirisches Buch (in der Art am ehesten dem *Candide* Voltaires vergleichbar), in dem ein Flüchtling von einem Land in das andere flieht, da überall zu viele Tugenden verlangt werden'.[46] A popular left-leaning daily paper published in German in Paris, the *Pariser Tageblatt*, brought a number of articles focused or touching on Voltaire in the mid-1930s. One compares his wit favourably with Casanova's; another quotes a letter of 1 November 1756 to Maréchal Richelieu in which Voltaire writes of a 'fort joli engin' that he has designed, obviously a kind of tank, of which a prototype has been made: 'Je voudrais que vous commandassiez l'armée, et que vous tuassiez force Prussiens avec mon petit secret' (D7043).[47] The *PTB* reviewed Maurois' 1935 French biography of Voltaire, which was considered too 'kühl' for the 'Insurrektioneller' Voltaire, and just after the second anniversary of the book burnings it reprinted part of an essay on Voltaire by Heinrich Mann from 1910.[48]

In January 1936 – just as Goll was reaching for Voltaire and becoming anxious about his own safety – Alfred Döblin advised the readership of the *PTB* to learn French, to read modern French fiction and immerse themselves in the thought and tradition of French culture. In terms reminiscent of Kant's famous answer to the question 'Was ist Aufklärung?' he urged, 'Ergreift die Gegenwart! Wagt es!' and 'Man lese […] den "Candide" und "Zadig" von Voltaire, lest sie oft, seht in den "Liaisons dangereuses" des Laclos, wie man die erlesenste Psychologie mit

44 *The Living Thoughts of Voltaire*, ed. by André Maurois (New York, 1939), originally in French (Paris, 1938).

45 *Candide*, illus. Paul Klee (New York, 1944). On the original 1920 edition see, Robert Vilain, 'Images of Optimism? German Illustrated Editions of Voltaire's *Candide* in the Context of the First World War', *Oxford German Studies*, 37:2 (2008), 223–52.

46 Bertolt Brecht, *Werke: Große kommentierte Berliner und Frankfurter Ausgabe*, ed. by Werner Hecht et al., 31 vols (Berlin, Weimar and Frankfurt a. M., 1988–2000), XVIII, 580 ('Flüchtlingsgespräche'). Brecht drily praises Voltaire's scepticism about miracles in 'Fünf Schwierigkeiten beim Schreiben der Wahrheit' (1934/35) in the context of his poem *La Pucelle* (XXII, 82–83). He makes dozens of passing (complimentary) references to Voltaire in works and letters during this period.

47 Anon., 'Der grosse Voltaire', *Pariser Tageblatt*, 3.747, 29 December 1935, p. 3; Anon., 'Voltaire und die modernen Kriegsmittel', *Pariser Tageblatt*, 3.685, 28 October 1935, p. 2.

48 Ferdinand Hardekopf, 'Voltaire – ein "Griff"', *Pariser Tageblatt*, 3.698, 10 November 1935, p. 4; Heinrich Mann, 'Voltaires Mission', *Pariser Tageblatt*, 3.516, 12 May 1935, p. 3 (originally in *Der Sozialist*, 2.11, 1 June 1910, pp. 84–87).

der grössten Leichtigkeit und mit sprachlichem Raffinement verbinden kann'.[49] A year later Voltaire was the subject of a long reflection by Bruno Altmann – a Berlin-based Jewish writer and critic who fled to France after the *Machtergreifung* – who was writing a series of articles for the exile journal *Pariser Tageszeitung* on German philosophy, in particular on the falsification of philosophical positions by the National Socialists.[50] In one of these – which was republished with some cuts and additions in *Neuer Vorwärts* eighteen months later[51] – Altmann notes that at first the Nazis regarded Voltaire with the utmost scepticism as one of what Franz Werfel called the 'Intellektsbestien', not least because of his critique of Frederick II and Prussian authoritarianism, the quoted sections of which could easily have been written about Hitler. However, because Heidegger intervened in his favour – suggesting that Voltaire was not 'merely' an Enlightenment rationalist – Altmann claims that Ernst Krieck (one of the instigators of the book burnings on the Römerberg on 10 May 1933) was charged with proving how Voltaire was, after all, proto-Nazi. According to Altmann, with the help of an academic philosopher by the name of Werninghaus,[52] Krieck focused upon his anti-clericalism and his anti-Semitism, not by actually reading Voltaire but by critiquing a book entitled *Voltaire und die Juden* that had appeared 'kurz vor der Machergreifung' and was (possibly) written by Martha Friedländer, a Jewish teacher and writer who concluded that Voltaire's anti-Semitism was decisively offset by his broader views on tolerance and that had he lived a little longer to experience the French Revolution he would have redeemed himself.[53] The *Neuer Vorwärts* version of Altmann's article inserts the claim that Voltaire '[kennt] den Begriff Rasse im ethnologischen Sinne noch gar nicht' so Krieck and Werninghaus have no grounds to regard him as a 'Rassenantisemit'.

The German exile community in the USA and others hostile to the National Socialists (whether Jewish or not) overwhelmingly ignored or excused Voltaire's anti-Semitism, a facet of his writings that must surely have been evident to Goll,

49 Alfred Döblin, 'Historie und kein Ende', *Pariser Tageblatt* 4.754 (5 May 1936), p. 3.

50 Bruno Altmann, 'Voltaire Nationalsozialist', *Pariser Tageszeitung*, 2.251 (17 February 1937), p. 4. See also Michaela Enderle-Ristori, *Markt und intellektuelles Kräftefeld: Literaturkritik im Feuilleton von 'Pariser Tageblatt' und 'Pariser Tageszeitung' (1933–1940)* (Tübingen, 1997), p. 194, n. 316.

51 Bruno Altmann, 'Die Nazis bürgern ein: Intellektsbestie Voltaire als Nationalsozialist', *Neuer Vorwärts*, 273, 11 September 1938, p. 2.

52 I cannot trace this person. In *PTB* he is described as 'der Professor der Philosophie an der Universität Kiel' but that description is omitted in *Neuer Vorwärts*, although this version refers to a 'Broschüre' entitled 'Voltaire und wir Nationalsozialisten' by Werninghaus.

53 Altmann, 'Voltaire Nationalsozialist', p. 4. Martha Friedländer (1896–1978) was a distinguished educationalist specializing in deafness and speech defects; she was dismissed from her teaching position in October 1933 'wegen nicht-arischer Abstammung' (https://bremer-frauenmuseum.de/2017/02/21/friedlaender-martha/, accessed 12 October 2022). Despite extensive researches, it has not been possible to establish whether she was the author of this book on Voltaire or indeed whether such a book was published.

However, there is no trace of it in Goll's published writings, letters or diaries. There is ample evidence, however, of Goll's admiration for Voltaire, and if Jean sans Terre is obviously no Candide – his introspection and *Weltschmerz* are wholly alien to the eighteenth-century optimist –there is no doubt that Voltaire sustained Goll during his New York exile as a talismanic example of an exile who maintained his commitment to the values of freedom and intellectual independence in the face of adversity and persecution.

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